

THE  
APOTHEOSIS  
OF  
MR. TYRAWLEY



E·LIVINGSTON·PRESCOTT

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MR. TYRAWLEY

BY  
E. LIVINGSTON PRESCOTT



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# THE APOTHEOSIS OF MR. TYRAWLEY

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## CHAPTER I

### A MAN OF SIN

MR. TYRAWLEY was down on his luck. He wore beautiful clothes; he was peculiarly handsome, having a pure Greek profile, deep blue eyes,—which expressed sentiments at present unknown to their possessor,—a heavy chestnut mustache and chestnut hair, whose hyacinthine waves conventional cropping could not altogether efface; the figure of an athlete of six feet, and the complexion of a delicate girl. But all these advantages had so far failed to assure to their owner any prospect of dinner, and his breakfast had been slight. So he was depressed, bit his mustache in the absence of any thing else to bite, and envied a stout artisan who sat eating hot beefsteak-pudding out of a yellow basin, just brought him by his wife, and flinging bits of bread to the sea-gulls flying round.

The place was the pier at Claretown, on a stormy, sunny, breezy day; the hour 12.30, the season autumn. There was the usual crowd of

promenaders on the esplanade and pier; and a very few benighted individuals, leaving the gay throng, had descended among the timbers at the lower end of the ladder, with lines and bait, and an impression that they could catch fish.

Now, Mr. Tyrawley had outlived all illusions; therefore, when he descended among these dreamers, it was only that he might escape at once from the beefsteak-pudding and his own large circle of unprofitable acquaintances.

He leaned in an ill-tempered way against a great black beam and smoked; for people will give you tobacco who will not ask you to dinner; and tobacco deadens one sort of sickness, if it causes another. Near him sat a small boy in sailor costume of a fancy and aristocratic character, dangling a pair of short, blue silk legs, and a line big enough to catch a dolphin, toward the swirling green water, and absently munching a bun, which Tyrawley felt to be aggravating. He noticed with languid curiosity that the small boy's sister was fishing too, but in a half-hearted, feminine way, her eyes strained to the distant horizon, where the black purple clouds were drifting up, or to the deep brown fringe of seaweed sweeping down on the timbers.

He was not much interested in girls; his acquaintance with women, though vast, was superficial, and confined chiefly to married ladies—dowagers for choice—as more worth cultivation. So he only casually remarked that her eyes were

dark and large, and her cheek of that warm paleness on which red-rose crimson easily flashes and fades; that she had a stream of fair hair, not unlike seaweed, with which the wind played wild tricks; and that she would be pretty some day.

Suddenly something happened—it was the abrupt and unintentional descent of the small boy into the water, bun, line, and all; and this incident was immediately followed by a further development, namely, a flying of female skirts into the green, bubbling whirlpool he had created.

“By Jove! little fool,” said Mr. Tyrawley between his clenched teeth. “I think I’ll go too;” and he swung himself over the edge with a cool and wary calculation of exactly where to drop.

The girl was actually trying to swim, though the water kept dashing her rather alarmingly against the beams, but she saw Tyrawley’s intention, and managed to gasp:

“Not me—Bertie.”

Mr. Tyrawley peevishly changed his course, secured the sailor, who appeared little at home in his native element, and chucked him into the arms of a lad who had been fishing near; while he snatched up, just in time, a limp, white figure that was drifting under the pier, and managed, with the help of excited spectators, to scramble up the slippery steps on to the safe ground.

“Give me the young lady, sir,” said the pro-

prietor of the beefsteak-pudding. "You don't look over grand yourself."

But Mr. Tyrawley had a feeling that he was much more likely to collapse without his slight burden than with it. So he shook his head and climbed the upper stairs.

Here he was greeted by a frantic, flushed, sobbing, laughing woman in velvet and furs, who announced herself "*Her* mother," and embraced him and her child alternately.

He put her gently aside, and, laying the girl down on a couch of shawls which had been hastily provided, put his hand on her heart. As he did so, and felt a feeble flutter, like a dying bird's wing, her large dark eyes opened languidly, and fixed on his a look of childish awe and gratitude. It was a look that a sinking soul might cast on a rescuing angel, and it went to the marrow of Mr. Tyrawley's bones, and had the effect of making him feel more than usually unangelic. So he said, in a voice of studied coolness, still rather panting from his immersion:

"She's all right, but you had better get her home. Let one of these beggars run for a fly."

He could not remove his hat, because the sea had saved him that trouble. He bowed his handsome head, with that graceful and distinguished courtesy which caused the colonel of the local volunteers to say that Tyrawley was the finest gentleman, as well as the biggest rascal, going; and, turning away, pushed through the crowd,



who were admiring his valor and pitying his wetness. But a man, deputed by the girl's mother, rushed after him and caught him by the arm.

"I say, Mrs. St. Just—that's the mother of the young lady you saved—wants your card, that she may write and thank you."

Mr. Tyrawley murmured something like an oath, as the admiring crowd swarmed round him afresh, but even in that trying moment habitual prudence triumphed, and he extricated a soppy piece of pasteboard from a damp pocket-book, and once more shaking off his admirers, proceeded on his way with a rapid though not very assured step.

The spectacle of a gentleman in fashionable morning costume, bareheaded, and dripping like a sea-god, being unusual even in Claretown, which is accustomed to eccentricities, Mr. Tyrawley had some difficulty in eluding public esteem, but eventually, getting rid of the last small boy by a scowl of peculiar atrocity, he made his way through back- and by-streets, ever upward, till he attained a small and desolate terrace, the very ragged fringe of the meanest suburb of Claretown, where the wind, sweeping from the downs, cut like a knife, and the autumn mists lay low and chill—a terrace whose immediate outlook was a patch of turnips and a brickfield.

Stopping at No. 17 (at Nos. 18, 19, 20 the builder had lost heart, and left them to moulder uncompleted), Mr. Tyrawley applied a latch-key

and entered a very narrow, oil-clothed passage, where he was confronted by his landlady—a short, pale, middle-aged woman in black, with a figure like a packing-case, and a pair of strange, visionary gray eyes. She emerged, however, from her vision sufficiently to glance from her drenched lodger to the stair-carpet—which looked as if any sort of water would have benefited it—and remarked that he was wet.

“Yes, Mrs. Higson,” he replied. “The sea is wet, and I have been there.”

“‘The wicked,’” said Mrs. Higson, “‘flee when no man pursueth.’”

“In this case,” said he, “the wicked was pursuing, not fleeing. I went after a young lady.”

She shut her lips with a short nod, condemnatory but acquiescent.

“Poor thing!”

“Oh, it was for her good,” said he. “Unless you consider it a good thing to be drowned.”

“That,” she replied, “depends on the person, and their state.”

“For a man of sin like me, I suppose, it would be very bad, as hastening the inevitable.”

“Yes, Mr. Tyrawley.”

“But how about your respected husband, Mrs. Higson, who has been, to my knowledge, drunk for two nights, and yet is a Little Elijah?”

“Mr. Higson,” said she with decision, “is selected ; therefore, he is all right.”

"Our choice selected, three a penny," murmured the lodger, whose teeth were beginning to chatter with cold. "Now, my dear woman, even men of sin catch cold. Let me go upstairs, will you?"

"If you don't mind," said she, "going into the back-kitchen, I'll bring you a change there. Salt water spoils the carpets."

Even the boldest scoffer, with a consciousness of unpaid rent, shrinks from the wrath of his landlady. Tyrawley went meekly to the dank and stony little retreat prescribed, and there made a shivering toilet, and looked thereafter so blue and pinched that Mrs. Higson, with a touch of human feeling, invited him to come and warm himself by the kitchen fire, while she hung his drenched clothes at a prudent distance from it, and he looked ruefully on.

"Awful nuisance!" said he. "Bother saving one's fellow-creatures!"

Then he thought of the little fluttering pulse under his hand, and the big, dark blue eyes, which looked such adoring reverence on his most unworthy self, and his heart smote him, and he added:

"But she was only a child, and probably, Mrs. Higson, not selected."

"Most likely not," said Mrs. Higson, spreading his coat on the back of a chair; "the Little Latter End Elijahs are few and feeble as yet."

"Mr. Higson," murmured the incorrigible

Tyrawley, "is certainly the latter; but I gather that, if you are a Little Latter End Elijah, you may—excuse a worldly proverb—jump over gates of sobriety, and so on, without any unpleasant results; whereas, if you're not, you must not even look through them."

"Just so," she replied composedly. "But I ought to tell you, Mr. Tyrawley, that that shirt I have just brought you is the only one you now have that is not ragged, and the man called to-day for the money for new-soling your boots which you promised him last week, and——"

Poor Tyrawley writhed a little at this piece of feminine retaliation.

"All right. I know," he said peevishly. "Now I'm dry enough for that carpet, I think I'll go upstairs. My ducking, or something, has given me a racking headache."

He rose, but the landlady's back being turned for a moment, his eye—it was the eye of the falcon or the fox, or any creature that lives by preying on its fellows, soft and languid as it appeared—perceived something twisted round a button of the wet coat. It was two or three long, fair hairs, so fine that only such an eye could have detected them.

What part of this reprobate's schemes was it that necessitated the rapid and secret seizure of that sentimental memento by those long, taper fingers of gentlemanly whiteness and predatory flexibility?



When he was alone upstairs, he wound his prize round his finger, placed it in an envelope, appending the date methodically, and put it away in the secret drawer of a much-battered Russia leather writing-case; having done which, he flung himself back in a low chair, as luxurious as could be expected for four shillings and sixpence a week, and laughed a bitter, silent laugh; then took a hard pull at his pipe, and, after a restless turn or two in his narrow den, went down stairs again and out.

“Mr. Tyrawley,” said Mrs. Higson, hearing his step, and perhaps smitten with womanly remorse, to which even the Little Latter End Elijahs, albeit a self-justifying sect, are not altogether impervious, “you’ve got a little tea left in the cupboard, and I have water on the boil. Won’t you have a cup before you go out?”

“No, thanks. One advantage being half drowned has, in common with the complete process, is that you don’t want any thing to eat or drink afterward. And the exchequer is low, Mrs. Higson; I’m going out to fill it.”

She watched him from the kitchen window as he lounged down the street.

“And what you do to fill it,” she said, “passes me. And as to how you got half-drowned—it may be true, or it may not. If you’re like Saul, higher by the head and shoulders in stature than most, it strikes me you’re uncommonly like him in being lower than most in your principles.”

It is a just retribution on a scoundrel that when, by chance, he does a good thing, peculiarly bad designs are sure to be attributed to him, just as a good man who makes a slip is usually forgiven on the score of previous good character. It is only in the eighteenth chapter of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, and similar pages, that the way of judging is "equal."

## CHAPTER II

### HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND

MR. TYRAWLEY'S destination was a certain public-house and billiard-room in the nasty part of Claretown. He entered the bar, imbibed the very cheapest form of liquid refreshment with an unconcealed grimace, and, nodding his head toward the first floor, enquired :

“Any one up there ?”

The landlord grinned, as landlords do grin at the discomfiture of customers whose taste for liquor is limited. “Nobody,” said he.

Mr. Tyrawley mounted the dingy stair with a slow and disgusted step. Further discomfiture met him in the person of a strange marker, for with the last one he had had a friendly understanding.

“Oh, new face,” said he, coolly looking the marker over. “Where’s the other fellow, then ?”

“Sloped, sir, with some cash. They’re after him, I believe.”

“Poor devil !” said Mr. Tyrawley thoughtfully, as he slowly removed his coat, selected a cue, and chalked it.

The new marker stood watching him as he

knocked about the balls, making some brilliant strokes and missing others. Presently the man turned his back to rub a cloth over the dusty window, and then Mr. Tyrawley began to play with more purpose, finally settling down to patient practice of a difficult cannon.

As he stood up for a moment to rest, he caught the marker's eye fixed keenly upon him. They looked hard at each other for a moment. The faintest ghost of a smile stole across the man's countenance, but Tyrawley remained quite unmoved.

"Play on this table pretty often, I reckon; don't you, sir?" said the man very civilly.

"Pretty often," said Tyrawley. "Why?"

"Seem to know it, that's all."

Their eyes met again. The marker strolled to the window, whistling under his breath, and Mr. Tyrawley stroked his mustache and deliberated. He played a little more, and then began to put on his coat. The marker came obsequiously to help him, during which operation Tyrawley remarked casually:

"D'ye know, that last man was really a good fellow. I often come here, and I always remembered him"—a slight pause—"when I was in funds. Thanks."

"Thank *you*, sir."

Mr. Tyrawley departed, viewed not without admiration by the marker.

"You're a cool hand, and no mistake," he



muttered. "A real toff, got into trouble and cast off by your friends, I expect. Play a pretty game, too—oh, a pretty, *pretty* game."

Mr. Tyrawley now made his way to his Club in the more fashionable part of Claretown. It was not *the* Club—he was wont to laugh and say that the company there was too expensive for a beggar—but it was sufficiently fashionable, and more than sufficiently fast. Careful fathers objected to their sons becoming members, and mothers deprecated it as a haunt of detrimentals, and Mr. Tyrawley was one of the best-known figures there. There were hawks for company, and pigeons to be plucked in a strictly gentlemanly manner. Tyrawley was a popular man because he was always languidly amiable and humorous, however low his exchequer.

On his way there he stopped at a small baker's shop, where stale rolls at a halfpenny tempted the hungry, and, after plumbing his pocket, bought one and ate it, leaning against the counter, to the puzzled admiration of the woman in charge.

The last crust was between that delicate, predatory finger and thumb, when a stray street dog pattered in and looked up, whimpering in his face.

"Are you hungry, old chap?" said Tyrawley.

The dog replied that he was, rather, which he meant in a slang sense. So Tyrawley flipped the morsel to him, and left the shop. The wind

seemed a shade less bitter, and the memory of the beefsteak-pudding less intrusive, after that.

As soon as he entered the Club, young Poyntz (Poyntz & Co., Bacon Merchants) challenged him to a game of billiards. Poyntz was an obnoxious sandy-haired youngster, plump as his sire's pigs, whose boast was that he could make himself at home anywhere, and whose manners and customs aggravated the calmest tempers.

But a fox must eat a crow if he cannot procure a pheasant; so Tyrawley smiled resignation, which Poyntz interpreted as rapture, and they took off their coats and played, presenting as striking a contrast as a thoroughbred plater and a useful mule.

But the spectators, who knew Tyrawley's form,—there were a good many men in the room, for the afternoon was wettish,—began to open their eyes as the latter missed stroke after stroke, and only saved the game through the fatuous idiocy of Poyntz's play.

"Have another game, dear boy," said the latter. "Nearly had you, eh? About equal, I think;" and he poked Tyrawley in the side with his cue with elegant facetiousness.

Every one was surprised when the latter hesitated a little. Perhaps Poyntz poked too hard, or perhaps a ducking in the sea and a halfpenny roll are not the best preparations for cool and scientific play.

"Come, I say, give a man his revenge," urged Poyntz.

The lookers-on chuckled as he rushed on his doom; and Tyrawley, taking up his cue with a slight effort, drawled:

"All right."

He played a stroke or two, failed in the simplest of cannons, laughed faintly, and dropped on one of the red leather settees.

"Wait a minute, young man," he said. "I've got a stitch in my side—indigestion or something."

"Been lunching?" suggested somebody.

"Just so," said Tyrawley, with a sarcasm of which his hearers were not aware.

Poyntz swelled out his chest, and remarked that he was just getting into good form, and he did not like to see fellows backing out of things.

"If Tyrawley doesn't murder that fellow, I shall," said Waters, adjutant of the local volunteers. "He's really too much of a cad."

But to murder the goose, or gander, which produces golden eggs is not the habit of gentlemen of Mr. Tyrawley's profession, so he said with meekness:

"I'll go on presently, old man," and held his side hard.

Here, however, a man, who had been standing in the background, taking in the scene with professional keenness, intervened. He was a sporting doctor, named MacAdam.

"No, you won't," he said, seating himself on

the settee, blighting Poyntz parenthetically with a growl, "Shut up! No, you won't," he repeated.

"Why?" enquired Tyrawley, with a weak defiance.

"Because," said the doctor deliberately, "you've got cold shivers, a touch of fever, and—unless I am much mistaken—a threatening of pleurisy. You'll go home to bed like a decent chap, in a cab which I shall send for, and send for your family physician. Here, Poyntz, hand over what you owe, and we'll pack him off."

Mr. Tyrawley's face lengthened.

"Sha'n't go," he said, writhing peevishly. "I don't believe in physicians."

Then he looked up with a smile into MacAdam's face, to take out the sting of his remark. He was an amiable person, and would have loved his kind—instead of preying on them, had circumstances permitted. Even a Bengal tiger, when fully and regularly fed, has been known to become sweet-tempered.

"I'm not joking," said MacAdam, as Poyntz sulkily placed in his outstretched palm sundry half-crowns, whose chink filled Mr. Tyrawley with most unheroic satisfaction.

"Here you are, old man. Now, Joe," turning to the marker, "order a cab, will you?"

"No," said Tyrawley, with gasping decision, getting on his feet. "I shall walk. The air will do me good."

"You can't, man," said MacAdam. "Air!—an east wind like a Pathan's knife. But," he added, another aspect of the case striking him as he observed Tyrawley's welcome of Poyntz's half-crowns, "my trap's at the door, and I'm going your way [which was a fiction]. I'll drive you, if you like."

Tyrawley would fain have refused. He had no wish that anybody at the Club should become acquainted with Alonzo Terrace and the amenities of his landlady. But he felt he couldn't walk, and a fly was out of the question with the possible expense of illness before him; so he murmured, "Thanks," and subsided on the settee.

As MacAdam turned from the window to announce that the trap would be round as soon as the mare could be persuaded to trot on four legs, instead of standing on two, a waiter brought in a note to Tyrawley. It had a large blue and red monogram, and was addressed in a wild female hand.

"Messenger waits, please sir," said the waiter. His eye was benignant as it rested on Tyrawley, who never swore at him or chaffed him—as the eye of one who conveys good tidings. He knew the look of a hungry man and the outward aspect of an invitation to dinner.

It was, indeed, a fervid petition from "M. A. St. Just" that he would come and dine with them quietly that evening, to be thanked, "though he could never be thanked enough," etc., etc., "and



if not that evening, would he name *any* evening, and she was *ever* gratefully his."

A little note was enclosed, written in a school-girl hand :

"DEAR MR. TYRAWLEY:

"Mother says I must write and thank you for perilling your life to save Bertie's and mine; but I can never, never do that properly. Only, if there is ever any thing I can do to show you what I feel about it, please let me know.

"I am,

"Your affectionate friend,

"NINA ST. JUST."

Now, Mr. Tyrawley had various interested friends, and admiring friends, and had had even impassioned friends; but he had never had an affectionate friend. That adjective belongs to home and tenderness, and other things with which a polite adventurer has nothing to do; and it went through him with a sense of sudden need and yearning.

But a man with pleurisy hanging over him cannot accept dinner invitations; so he disgustedly asked for pen and paper, and wrote :

"DEAR MRS. ST. JUST:

"I am very sorry I cannot avail myself of your kind invitation, as I am leaving Claretown for a few days. On my return I shall hope to do myself the pleasure of calling to see that your

daughter and Master Bertie are none the worse for their dip. Pray thank Miss St. Just for her note. I am quite overwhelmed at her gratitude for such a trifle.

“Yours sincerely,

“I. TYRAWLEY.”

“Ready, my son?” said the doctor, who had watched his rather faltering scrawl.

“Oh, yes! bother you—thank you,” said Tyrawley, following the little short, stout doctor down stairs. “A man ought never to be seedy who has nobody to coddle him; he becomes such a nuisance to himself and his chums.”

“Where to, old man?” said MacAdam, as the mare executed her usual prologue. He had lowered his voice. Tyrawley felt grateful.

“17 Alonzo Terrace. It is beyond Down Road, on the extreme edge of nowhere.”

“All right,” said the doctor cheerily. “Miss Fireworks will have you there in no time; there’s nothing she adores like a long spin.”

It *was* a long spin. Much conversation was impossible, between the eccentricities of Fireworks and the breathlessness of her passenger, who sat with a very pale face, grasping his side at every bound of the trap. Little MacAdam tucked the rug round his legs once or twice, and, as the mare at last slackened her pace, looked at him with good-natured pity.

“Now, look here,” he said, “you go straight

to bed, and let somebody clap you on a big mustard-plaster, and another after that—till the pain abates. Keep warm and quiet, and take slops, and then you'll be all right. I'll come round and see you to-morrow. What's amiss?"

"MacAdam, I can't."

"Can't what? Take slops? You must, man, or you'll be in a regular fever."

"Oh, I can take any thing I can get; but, MacAdam, I'm not in a position——"

"Oh, hang that!" said the doctor hastily. "I come as a friend—that's understood."

The helplessness of illness was upon Tyrawley, and he could not fight, so he said faintly:

"Thanks, old man," and collapsed on the seat.

He got down with difficulty when Fireworks permitted it, and was presently absorbed into the dark passage of No. 17, and was coldly met by the stony and reproachful glance of Mrs. Higson, who foresaw much trouble and small profit.

"It seems," he said meekly, when, later on, he was experiencing the tortures of an ill-made and ill-applied mustard-plaster at her hands, "almost a pity I wasn't drowned this morning, Mrs. Higson, doesn't it? We should both have been spared this annoyance."

"Every thing is a mystery," she retorted tartly, "including who's to pay for all you'll want while you are ill."

Tyrawley bit his lip, and felt unequal to further witticisms after this snub.

## CHAPTER III

### A SORT OF ISHMAEL

MACADAM came next day, and found his patient hollow-eyed and quiescent from pain, bound hand and foot in the iron thrall of Mrs. Higson, whose nursing was of a distinctly penal character.

She resented his faint jokes; and the insinuating gaze of those eloquent, deep-blue eyes, which had wheedled so many middle-aged female hearts out of their better judgment, merely aggravated her. She would have preferred him to bewail and even to blaspheme, as more in accordance with his character; but want of pluck was not among his sins, though Mrs. Higson, armed with a raging mustard-plaster, might have appalled the bravest.

So things went on for a day or two. Then came a faint change for the better. Finally, one bitter afternoon, MacAdam, coming in, found his patient up, shivering over a very small cindery fire, clad in an ancient silk dressing-gown, the remnant of some day of extravagant sunshine.

It was a wretched little room, imperfectly carpeted, curtainless, and visited from the turnip-field by the four winds. The bed was unmade,

the furniture undusted, and last night's basin of gruel standing congealed on the mantelpiece.

The doctor made a face when he saw it. "Hallo!" he said, "is this that woman's idea of nourishment? No wonder you look all eyes and bones."

"Her one idea," said Tyrawley. "Oh," he added fervently, "it's a mercy to be up! She always puts every thing just out of my reach. I believe she wanted to make me swear, that she might institute unfavorable comparisons between me and her husband, who is always drunk, and in that state talks Scripture in a way that makes even a reprobate like me sick."

"What are they?" said MacAdam, drawing a chair to the fire, and poking it recklessly. "Hardshell Baptists, Ranters—what?"

"No, neither. They have a tea-caddy which they call a chapel, in which nine persons, I think, meet to discuss the faults of their neighbors, and call themselves 'Little Elijahs,' because that prophet was, I believe, a reformer. I had a Baptist landlady once," said Tyrawley pensively, "but she was a decent woman, though I didn't treat her well; and I lived eight months with Ranters, who were really awfully good folks. The husband used to talk to me quite paternally about my sins, and the wife made me puddings which she could ill afford, having five olive-branches, because, she said, I looked as if I didn't get enough to eat,"



"Did you?" said the doctor. "Excuse my curiosity; it's professional."

"Well, perhaps I didn't; fellows like me alternately fast and feast. But I was going to tell you about my Methodist landlady. She was a good soul. She nursed me through an attack like this, and absolutely wept when I was in danger. She and I actually ran the house together for six weeks after her husband had died and left her with five small children."

"How was that?" said the doctor. He was observing, unobserved, sundry small details of his patient's condition.

"It was this way. She had an offer of work at the house of some people she had been servant to, I think, and could not leave the children, although the eldest was a little mother of eleven. So I looked after matters, under the little mother's superintendence. I did, upon my honor! I sometimes even performed their toiletts, more or less incorrectly, and it was quite an edifying spectacle to see me pack them off to Sunday-school, and then go indoors and cook the dinner."

"You must tell me some more another time," said the doctor. "But now I want to tell you something."

"Something unpleasant, I suppose," said Tyrawley. "Fire away!" and he looked him in the eyes with a faint defiance.

"You need not get your temper up, old

chap," said MacAdam. "It's no offence, but rather a pity, as things are. Are you aware that your lungs are slightly affected? I don't mean this present attack, but the trouble is of some standing."

"Dangerous?" asked the other quickly.

"No, not at present, but you'll have to look after yourself, or it may become so."

Tyrawley looked rather forlorn. "That means, I suppose," said he sulkily, "that I shall eventually gravitate to the workhouse—'Rattle his bones over the stones, a troublesome pauper whom nobody owns.' Eh?"

"Oh, bosh! nonsense! Don't be an ass; 'tis nothing like that," said the doctor hastily. "Go abroad, if you can, for the winter."

"What would you think," enquired Tyrawley, "of a two-hundred-guinea steam yacht and a villa in the Riviera?"

MacAdam grunted.

"Seriously," continued Tyrawley, "I know I'm a bit touched in the wind, in consequence of hardships I underwent in my interesting infancy."

"Parents died young?"

"My mother," replied Tyrawley, "was so disgusted, poor thing, at the first sight she had of me, that she left the world immediately I entered it, having furnished me with an appropriate name. What do you think it was?"

"Isaac, or Ishmael?" said the doctor. "I've noticed you've signed an 'I.'"

"Infelix. There was a cheerful welcome for a youngster; but, inasmuch as nobody in particular ever called me by my Christian name, it does not matter. Well, I was carted about from lodging to lodging by my father, who was an airy rover, and experienced some startling transitions—from being set on a dinner-table in blue velvet raiment to sing music-hall songs, to cleaning knives and boots in a back kitchen, as some equivalent for my board."

"And then?"

"Then, at the ripe age of seven, I was sent to a cheap school, where I improved myself considerably in the art of pitch-and-toss, in which I had already attained some proficiency at street corners."

"Oh," said MacAdam dryly, "you begun it then, did you?"

"Yes," said Tyrawley coolly, "I begun it then. There was nothing else to do; I'd no pocket-money."

There was a slight pause. The two men looked hard at one another.

"Well," said the doctor, "I've always said I admired your play—never saw any thing that wasn't perfectly fair and square."

"*You* never did."

MacAdam turned his gaze on the fire and whistled. "Go on," he presently said, "though, 'pon my soul! I don't know why you tell me all this; it's no business of mine."

"A dog," said Tyrawley, "that has been much kicked seldom forgets any kind hand that has patted him. That's why, old man." He laid his white, thin fingers on MacAdam's knee.

"Oh, bother—stow that! What else on earth could a man do? But continue—you stopped at the cheap school——"

"Where my schooling was paid for by an uncle, who was a bigoted Catholic, and an uncommonly sharp business man. When I was fourteen he gave me two alternatives—one, to turn Catholic, and errand-boy in his office; the other, two years' more schooling at a better school, and then to be cast adrift. I chose the latter. On leaving school I got a clerkship, and might have drudged my way up, I think, if my sire had not been seized with a sudden fit of paternal yearning, or struck with my possible usefulness; for I was, I am told, a very picture of youth and innocence. He took me out with him to his haunts every night."

"What was his profession?" asked MacAdam.

"My own," said Tyrawley, with a shrug. "But," he added impartially, "I think he was a shade worse than I am. However, after making my youthful ideas shoot most luxuriantly, there was one day a most awful smash." He paused and looked gloomily into the embers. "I lost my clerkship and very nearly my

character, and in future I resolved to go to the dogs my own way. Shortly after, my father married a West Indian widow, who endowed him with fifty thousand pounds on the condition that he should part with that young villain his son. I needn't say he sacrificed me at once, and since then——”

Tyrawley raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders expressively.

“You have looked after yourself?” said MacAdam.

“With more or less success, for sixteen years.”

“You don't seem to have any chums?”

“No; I'm a sort of Ishmael, under the surface. Fellows like Jack Lark I can't stand. He and his set would be friendly enough with me, but somehow I can't stick them, though I know it's absurd; and, of course, I know well enough the best men at the Club would fight shy of me as a friend. Of course, in your profession, old man, it doesn't matter what sort of queer characters you pick up with. Well, there's my interesting narrative. This,” said Mr. Tyrawley, looking round, “supplies the moral.”

Dr. MacAdam was sorry for the reckless sinner, who looked so ill, and coughed so hard, but he could offer no improving comments. He was too conscious of the need of improvement in himself.

“Mean to do this always?” he enquired,



after a short silence, during which Tyrawley coughed.

"I suppose so, till I end in the hospital, or make a hole in the water, or get hurt in a drunken row, or something."

"But you don't drink?" said the doctor quickly.

"No, and I swear very little, and I don't go in for other things much, unless I get wild, once in a way. Oh, it's a wretched business all through!"

"Come, you mustn't get down in the mouth, or you'll interfere with your convalescence."

"Don't want to convalesce," said the other, leaning his head on his hand, "except for one reason, which Mrs. Higson would very distinctly explain to you."

"You look at things in that way because you're weak; you'll be as jolly as ever in a day or two."

"Oh, yes! jolly enough," replied Tyrawley sarcastically. "But I say," he added, with some earnestness, and a momentary glance toward his writing-case, where reposed in safety a little note, signed "Your affectionate friend," "how soon shall I be able to go out and make a call or two?"

"I should think in about a week," said MacAdam—"if you don't die of that hag's gruel meanwhile. I'll speak to her."

"No, don't, pray. It's bad enough as it is, and I can eat any thing that comes to hand now."

"All right," said MacAdam. "I'll look in

again in a day or two, and my old housekeeper, who is a genius at kickshaws, shall bring you something round."

"No, no!" said Tyrawley; but the doctor merely said "Bosh!" and departed.

The week passed, and three days tacked on to it,—in consequence, MacAdam said, of "want of rallying power,"—then Mr. Tyrawley found himself, one cold and sunny afternoon, knocking at the door of one of the biggest houses in the biggest square in Claretown.

"People evidently well off," he said inwardly, as a white-waistcoated and solemn butler admitted him. "Good for dinners and lunches, but scarcely worth that confounded attack of pleurisy."

He was pretending very hard that he was acting on an entirely sordid motive, for he well knew that a man of prey has no right to emotions. Nevertheless, no eighteen-year-old victim of calf-love ever felt a more sickening pang of disappointment than did this polite impostor when, being ushered into the big drawing-room, he found Mrs. St. Just alone. She overwhelmed him with renewed thanks, assured him that he was looking frightfully ill, and deplored it as the result of his "heroism" (all in a breath). An "h" or two escaped her in the process, but there were signs of some refinement, as well as unlimited wealth, about the room, and he began to persuade himself—for your thoroughbred

blackguard has a character to keep up as well as the righteous—that he had known what he was doing all along.

Mrs. St. Just was, he gathered, a widow with two children, to whom she was devoted. He also learned that her husband was of “high family,” the “very image of my Nina, whom you so nobly,” etc., etc., and that she herself had—if it takes three generations to make a lady—scarcely attained the second stage. Allusions to “my butler,” “my carriage,” to her daughter as “Miss St. Just,” and to a relative of whom she appeared to stand in awe as “My dear man’s nephew,” strengthened this impression. But Tyrawley welcomed it as being rather in favor of future intimacy.

Mrs. St. Just evidently did not *connaître son monde*. He had the manners of society, with a shade of soft deference superadded, and—“Such charmin’ looks, my child, and his voice is as sweet as a bell. But he’s coming to dinner to-morrow, and you’ll see for yourself.”

“I remember, mother,” said the tall, fair-haired Nina, in a low voice, while her large eyes saw once more that dazzle of whirling green water among the black piers, and the face that stooped over her, and seemed to give her her young life back.

## CHAPTER IV

### A STRANGE INSPIRATION

AFTER that call Mr. Tyrawley paused on the parade, looked at the sea, and took thought, as a result of which he proceeded to the billiard-room at the Club, cast a thoughtful glance around, and finally in dulcet accents invited Poyntz to have his revenge, which that blatant youth accepting, they presently played.

It was a sad, yet a lovely sight, to see how gently Tyrawley conducted the victim to his doom, as if, like Isaac Walton's angler putting a worm on a fish-hook, he loved him.

Soothed by judicious flattery, and stimulated by faintly veiled sarcasm, Poyntz played and played; won, and lost, and lost, and lost. Men stood round, admiring, though one or two elevated their eyebrows at the unequal strife. If they and Poyntz had known how loud the heart whose will impelled that white, skilful hand was thumping, how anxiously hope and fear strove under that cool exterior, they would have been beyond measure astonished.

When at last Poyntz sulkily announced that he had had enough, his antagonist, declining other

invitations, went smilingly away; but as he threaded a maze of back streets, he remarked to that inner self which receives so many confessions of weakness, "If that little beggar had only known what an awful funk I was in all the time!"

Then he entered a small corner shop, and gave back to an accommodating friend a square paste-board ticket, supplemented with the spoils of Poyntz; receiving in return, with a light heart, the dress-clothes which were meant to open the doors of Cupola Square to him the next evening. That evening was like a wild dream to Tyrawley, in retrospect, though it began very quietly; a piece out of somebody else's life—not his own.

He arrived cool, polished, perfectly got up, as if he had not had a three miles' walk from the bleak heights of Alonzo Terrace. He found his hostess rather overdressed; Master Bertie, who dined late in his honor; Nina, a grave, shy, beautiful statue in soft, sheeny gray; and a harmless married couple, prepared by the St. Justs to view him as the lion of the evening.

He, of course, took his hostess down, but he sat between her and Nina, and managed, with that swiftness of eye which belonged at once to his ordinary pursuits and his present condition of mind, while he talked to the one, to look at the other, collecting as much material as possible for his own after discomfort. That delicate yet decided profile, the young, proud curves of the

crimson lip, the fine paleness of the changing cheek, on which the velvet bloom of childhood still lingered; even the plaits of fair satin hair circling the small, stately head were not visions conducive to philosophical endurance of Mrs. Higson and Poyntz.

When he learned accidentally that she was but sixteen, and understood thereby the wide, innocent gaze of her large dark eyes, it did not make things any better. However, he showed no outward sign—his apprenticeship to the world had been too severe for that; he talked to her a little in a half paternal, half chivalrous way—he had found that this method of addressing their daughters went down well with desirable mothers—and he joked Bertie about the big fish that had nearly drowned three people; and generally interested himself politely in all that was said by everybody—and this is a valuable habit.

Dinner was over; the gentlemen rejoined the ladies; the hands of the blue Sèvres clock on the mantelpiece went round, and Tyrawley began to breathe bitter inward congratulations that he had not made a fool of himself—but he was a little too soon.

Mrs. St. Just proposed music. “Did Mr. Tyrawley sing?” He did, and he would, without pressing; he was quite aware that he had a particularly sweet tenor voice, and he felt a fierce desire to do something that he could do well and yet honestly, like other men. So he sang one or



two songs, Italian and English, and a little reckless German love-song he had picked up somewhere, and felt as if the tension were a little relieved.

Then Mrs. St. Just summoned her daughter to the piano. "My child," she said, "never will sing any thing but such grave songs. It doesn't seem natural for a young girl, though I must own nothing comes up to them. Sing that Bible thing, dear, you were singing last night."

So Nina, looking straight before her, sang, with that simplicity which is in itself the utmost pathos, and more pathetic still in combination with such words of complex sorrow, "He was despised and rejected of men."

Tyrawley said a mechanical "Thank you," and as mechanically asked for another. He showed no feeling, but the storm was wild enough within. Of course, he took the words to himself—people always do in supreme moments—and so made them poison instead of healing.

The soft iteration, "Despised, despised, rejected," seemed like a finger incessantly touching a wound; he could have groaned and cursed. The fine, gentlemanly Tyrawley, who could talk intellectually on every subject, was really so ignorant a heathen that he did not apprehend the true meaning of the words; but he was so afraid of himself under this new aspect that he was about to take his leave when Mrs. St. Just exclaimed:

“Oh! before you go you must see these hardy orchids my gardener has sent from my country house. Nina, child, take him into the conservatory.”

He followed the slight gray figure into the soft, scented half-light, and looked almost in silence at the strange blooms, which mock insect and reptile. He did not know whether it was Paradise or Hades. They were standing beneath a softly burning lamp. The tempest within had made him white to his very lips, and his heart beat pitifully. The girl, looking up from where she was kneeling to inspect a purple gloxinia, saw it and started; the hidden fervor of her nature, still but intense, rushed into her dark eyes, her voice melted unconsciously into child-like tenderness, as she said:

“Oh, how pale you look! You are ill.”

“It’s nothing,” said he, speaking fast, as men do to keep themselves under. “I’ve been a little ill—a touch of pleurisy—that’s all.”

She gazed into his face. “Pleurisy? People get that from catching cold. You got it in saving me and Bertie. Oh, Mr. Tyrawley!” and then he felt, light as a butterfly’s wing, the touch of two warm young lips on his hand as it rested on the staging.

He took it away, he wrung it in the other, he cried in a stifled voice, “Oh, my God! *don’t!* You don’t know what I am.”

And she, rising to her feet, stood, forgetting

to blush, forgetting herself, in this sudden glimpse of an agony she could not comprehend. He might have said or done something mad, but the habit of years conquered.

"You honor me too much," he said, with a return to that half-paternal manner which had been such a success hitherto. Then, as he saw her lip quiver, her eyes fill, her cheek crimson, passion conquered policy once more; he knelt on the stone floor, and pressed his lips to the dusty outer hem of her gray dress with a muttered, "This is my place, only too near."

Then he rose rather unsteadily—he was still weak. There was a strange darkness round his eyes, and his lips were white, as he said, with tender coldness:

"Now, forgive me my momentary aberration, and forget all this. Let us go and tell Mrs. St. Just we have seen the orchids, and then I'll say good-night."

He stood aside to allow her to precede him. That wild and humble caress had somehow been balm to the smart of the sudden wave of shame which had swept over her; and then he looked physically so unfit for further strain that she could not but second him. So she drew up her head and walked quietly into the drawing-room, where Mrs. St. Just only remarked, as Mr. Tyrawley made his *adieux*, that he looked frightfully ill, and ought to go home to bed.

He loathed the idea of Alonzo Terrace and its

associations so much that, when he was clear of Cupola Square, he went and stood dreamily on the parade, and looked across the waste of tossing waters, solemnly restless in the moonlight. His mind was like that tossing sea: in the new light that had risen upon him he was like two men, and they fought fiercely; though no one would have guessed it from that statuesque countenance and figure, motionless save for the slow stroking of his mustache.

A voice behind him suddenly remarked with emphasis:

"You're a fool—a confounded fool!"

It was MacAdam, come to blow off the effects of club whiskey and whist.

"I quite agree. I am a fool, and also am confounded, but I wasn't aware that I looked it."

"You do," said the doctor didactically. "Come, let's be moving," he added, putting his arm into Tyrawley's. "A man *is* a fool who, after a sharp attack of pleurisy, stands star-gazing in a summer greatcoat. I'll walk a bit of the way home with you, you lunatic."

"Thanks, do. I wasn't star-gazing either, rather the reverse. I was wondering," said he, looking straight into MacAdam's little keen gray eyes, "if I were to jump off the pier, whether a natural but idiotic instinct of self-preservation would make me strike out, or whether reason would triumph, and make me keep my arms close to my sides, and go down in a decent manner."

"Oh, reason!" snorted the doctor. "But I can tell you that you'd struggle like any thing."

"For what?" said Tyrawley.

"Your life, man."

Tyrawley whistled softly.

"What's amiss?" said MacAdam. "Dinner disagreed with you, luck bad—what?"

"Both; but neither in the way you mean. I've some thoughts," he said deliberately, "of going and getting ineffably drunk; only the worst of it is, I don't know the precise effect. It might be temporary oblivion——"

"Or," interrupted MacAdam, "it might be the police-station—don't be an ass. I ask you again, what's amiss?"

"Oh, every thing, I think," said Tyrawley, a little wildly; "and I wish," he added peevishly, "you wouldn't take me up like this, MacAdam. Nobody ever did before."

"I *have* odd fancies sometimes," returned he composedly. "Suppose you tell me the case? and I'll give you a professional opinion in strict confidence."

Tyrawley looked on the ground, and was silent for some time as they walked on; then he said, in an altered and less reckless tone—the most real perhaps MacAdam had ever heard him use:

"Perhaps I will, some time, if you don't change your mind."

"Come up to my diggings to-morrow," said

the doctor, "and dine with me. My sister is going out to tea and scandal."

Tyrawley hesitated.

"Don't do it in the warmth of your heart," said he, "after the Club whiskey, and say to-morrow morning, 'Hang that rascal! I wish I hadn't asked him.'"

"Oh, I sha'n't do that! Besides, whiskey doesn't affect me. Now here's your turning. Shoot home, there's a sensible chap, and leave drunks and drownings alone for to-night."

They shook hands and parted.

"Poor beggar!" thought MacAdam, turning to look after him, "seems miserable enough. Nobody would ever think he had this sort of thing in him, to see him among the fellows at the Club. I wonder what has stirred it up to-night?"

When he announced to his sister, an elderly spinster of rigid views, who was his guest for next day's dinner, she opened her eyes and pursed up her mouth disapprovingly.

"But isn't that person a regular gambler, a sort of impostor?" she enquired. "Dear Mrs. Gascoigne told me he had won ever so much of her boy Nathaniel's money at that Club of yours."

"There you go, you women!"—he was rather vexed with himself for the interest he could not help feeling in the questionable Tyrawley. "Old Mother Gascoigne is a gossip, and her sweet Nat as arrant a young rip as ever handled a cue; it will teach him to respect his elders if he is bled a



little. But that's the way; when a chap's down in the world nobody will ever let him get up. Tyrawley is a publican and a sinner, I grant you; but there are Pharisees as well," and he walked off in a huff, not, however, without hearing Miss MacAdam's parting observation:

"Apparently the man is clever enough to take *you* in."

## CHAPTER V

### THE PLEASURES OF RESPECTABILITY

MR. TYRAWLEY turned up at the doctor's next evening, looking rather fagged, half diffident, half defiant in manner.

He had slept but little the night before, and had spent the morning in hanging about Cupola Square, to see if he could catch a glimpse of Mrs. St. Just or her daughter, to remove or confirm a deep misgiving which had risen in his mind as he stared at the gray dawn. He thought it but too probable that Nina St. Just would, on thinking his outbreak over, cut him, as the best way of escaping an awkward memory. However, he was lucky enough to meet her eye as—a member of one of those regiments of fair equestrians for which Claretown is famous—she turned the corner into the parade. It was only one look, and rather a timid one; but there was a touch of pity, and even of anxiety, in it, which, by some strange alchemy of the affections, confirmed certain half-formed resolutions. The idea of Tyrawley making resolutions would have been too utter a joke a week ago, even to himself, but it took place all the same.

Still he rather shrank from his interview with MacAdam. When you have never opened your mind to any body for sixteen years, the hinges have got stiff; and the two men talked on ordinary topics, till a dinner, which Miss MacAdam pronounced far too good for "that adventurer," but which the doctor had positively insisted on, had been discussed, and they were sitting in the latter's smoking-room, with a blazing fire within, and a howling wind without; both circumstances, I think, favorable to confidence.

"Now," said MacAdam, breaking the silence, "have another cigar, and let us hear what the case is."

Tyrawley stroked his mustache with a nervous hand, and looked rather haggardly into the fire.

"Well, it is not exactly a case. It's your opinion I want."

"You mayn't like it," said the doctor, "when you get it."

"Very likely not, but it can't make things look any blacker than they do. Well, this is it. Can a man who was born to go on the wrong side of the post—bred and trained to go on the wrong side, and has always taken a pride in going on the wrong side—have any hope at all of ever going straight?"

He held his breath when he had asked the question, and looked a trifle wistful as MacAdam replied, with the sententiousness of his country:

"It would depend on the man, and his age."

"The man," said Tyrawley doggedly, "is habitually more or less of a swindler and a vagabond. He has come one or two muckers so tremendous that he runs the risk of being kicked out of all decent company, if they were known."

"Muckers of what sort?" enquired MacAdam judiciously.

"Monetary transactions," said the other, in a tone in which shame and defiance were oddly blended. "It may, however, be said for him that he never got drunk from choice, and is constitutionally averse to any thing but mild and interested flirtations with dowagers."

"Funny, if true."

"It is true; the man in this respect is better than some much better fellows. He has lived thirty-three years under more or less general censure, and his name is Tyrawley, as you probably guess."

"I did," said the doctor, and there was a somewhat prolonged silence.

"Is there," said Tyrawley at last, rather huskily, "the ghost of a chance?"

The doctor fidgeted uneasily. "Oh, my dear chap," said he, "why on earth should you ask *me*?"

"Because I have only a formal acquaintance with any but individuals of my own species, except you."

"Well," said the doctor presently, "I'm not

much of a judge of morals, God knows; but I had a good mother, and I'll speak according to my light, I promise you, old man," he added, laying his little pudgy hand kindly on the other's knee. "What's the meaning of this sudden convulsion? You always seemed so jolly."

Here a wonderful thing occurred. Mr. Tyrawley *blushed*—actually blushed; a faint red spot touched the cheek which sickness had left hollow, and a faint sigh escaped him.

"Oh," said the doctor, "you needn't tell me any more; it's not a dowager this time. Well, I won't ask any questions. I'll give you that opinion instead. It *is* possible, but awfully hard. *Facilis descensus Averni*—but the ascent is steep, and every now and then somebody will give you a push down again."

"Of course, I'm prepared for that."

"Yes," continued the doctor, "the law of consequences is rigid enough. If you've never worked—in addition to the internal difficulty, which is considerable—you'll find, when you try it, that, if you work harder than others, they'll say it's for show; and if you go the ordinary pace, you're lazy. Then if you have an honest love, or even friendship, they will say you have an object to gain. You mustn't be too pleasant, or they'll call you a humbug; and if you speak straight, they'll say it's uncommon cheek. If you think you can face it, and if the motive is sufficient, it's all right; but if not, I shouldn't

begin. A false start takes the courage out of the best horse."

"I think," said Tyrawley, "I have no motive, but something has happened which has made what I am doing now perfectly intolerable."

The doctor studied him as he leaned his chin on his open palms. Tyrawley stared into the fire.

"More spirit than stamina, physically," he thought. "Poor chap! I'm afraid he'll make a bad fist of it; he has no more idea of what he's in for than Fireworks, if I were to put her in a brick-cart. Must keep my patient's heart up, however." So he said, quite gently, "Well, I'll quote to you a saying of my mother's, who is in heaven, if any body ever went there. She used to tell me that there were two phrases which would carry a man through any difficulty——"

Tyrawley looked at him with the mute, teachable enquiry of a child, which touched the little doctor.

"And those were," he continued seriously, "'I will—God help me.' She said one was no good without the other."

Tyrawley opened his lips to speak once or twice, but no sound came. At last he put his head down on his hands, and whispered, rather than spoke, with a long pause between the two phrases, "I will—God help me!"

That gentle Presbyterian lady little thought how the simple words spoken to her small, flaxen-



headed son, in a Highland manse, would make anchorage years after for a sinking soul.

"Amen," said little MacAdam solemnly ; and it seemed to him that for a second he saw his dead mother's face again. "Now," said he cheerily, after a moment, "what is the first step on this straight road?"

"I've been thinking that over," said the other. "Work is, of course, the thing. Clerking, I suppose; but who would take a man at my age, and without a character? I can't very well be a laborer, and I'm too old to learn a trade. There's only one opening I can see at present. I think I could be a billiard-marker. I can play, as Poyntz knows ; address and appearance good, as advertisements say; and lots of fellows I know would give me a reference for *that*."

"Not a bad idea for a start; but stop a bit. What sort of hand do you write? I forget."

Tyrawley took out pocket-book and pencil, scribbled a few lines, and handed them over.

"Come, that's fine. I think, as it happens, I can get you a job for a week or so. There's a brother medico of mine, a learned professor, who is writing a book, and wants it copied by somebody with two grains of sense, who knows the difference between psychical and physical."

"MacAdam," said the other falteringly, "I don't know what to say to you except 'thanks.' But if there were more men like you, there would be fewer blackguards like me."

"Oh, you weren't meant for a blackguard! We shall see you county magistrate, or something yet."

"From the dock to the bench—eh!" said Tyrawley, with the ghost of a smile. "I believe if I go straight I shall actually disappoint my worthy landlady, who has made up her mind I'm a 'vessel of wrath.'"

"I should show up at the Club, if I were you," said MacAdam, "and go about as usual. You can do your work early in the day; and I don't think I should try marker till every thing else failed. This friend of mine might recommend you on."

"Well, if I go to the Club, I needn't play duffers like Poyntz any more—needn't play at all, in fact, for I can't afford to lose."

"Play whist at penny points; science comes out there. Now, if you like, I'll take you round and introduce you to my brother-sawbones straight away."

A few days later MacAdam was smitten with curiosity to see how Tyrawley worked in harness; so he took Fireworks a spin up the parade to Greytown, which is on the sea-front, but at the extreme end of Claretown proper. Here the streets are wide and windy, the houses good, but gray and chilly, trees there are none, and passengers are few; it is intensely respectable and hopelessly dull. MacAdam cast the reins to his groom at the dullest house in the dullest square,

and was presently confronted by a dingy maid, who admitted him with a reluctant proviso that Dr. Grenfell would be in in a minute.

"I say," said MacAdam, "there's a gentleman, a friend of mine, doing some work for Dr. Grenfell here ; I'll go and talk to him meanwhile."

He was accordingly shown into a dismal study at the back of the house, whose outlook was a strip of pebbly garden, decorated with a few stunted marigolds. The walls were covered with bookcases, the furniture generally with pamphlets and papers ; shelves held sundry strange and grisly preparations, the fire was dead in the grate, and the atmosphere distinctly chilly. Tyrawley, seated at a table to catch the last light of the autumn evening, was writing, with all the painstaking accuracy of a new hand.

He started up, looking cold and stupefied when MacAdam, leaning over his shoulder, said:

"Hallo, old man—'pthisis'—that's not the way to spell 'phthisis' ! He took the pen from the other's hand and altered the word.

"No, I suppose not. I'm always making mistakes ; but I'm rather cold, and I get thick-headed when I've been at it a long time."

"I dare say ; can't shake down to it all at once. There's a difference between this and playing billiards at the Club and knocking about the parade."

"I should think there was," said Tyrawley, getting up and stretching himself.

"Oh, MacAdam," he added earnestly, laying his hand on the little man's shoulder, "you don't know the pleasures of respectability!"

"Thank you for the compliment," said the doctor, with a dry chuckle.

"Bosh! I mean for a beggar like me, who has never earned an honest penny. I assure you, when the professor handed over the first few shillings I could have worshipped it like a fetich."

"More fool you. And I don't understand, because I know you've been flush enough sometimes—thanks to Poyntz & Co."

"That's just like it. Robbing children and idiots! But that half-sovereign was fair pay for fair work."

"How many hours a day," said the doctor, "may I ask you, do you work in this well of a place?"

"About seven; but pray don't say any thing to Grenfell," in alarm, "or he will think I have been growling, and shunt me."

He had seen MacAdam's elevated eyebrows.

"H'm, ten shillings for forty-two hours—not twopence-halfpenny an hour. The British work-man would turn up his nose to the skies; but old Grenfell always was a stingy customer. Does he give you a decent lunch?" enquired the doctor, casting his eyes suspiciously on a rather unpromising-looking luncheon-tray.

"Oh, yes! all right, when he doesn't forget it

altogether in the pursuit of science," said Tyrawley, with rather an awkward laugh. "I can see he despises me awfully if I venture to hint at the discomforts inseparable from matter, even when mind is in question."

"Yes," said MacAdam; "he's a chap with one idea. Outside that, and a faint respect for conventionalities, he is the most selfish beggar that ever lived. Get on with him all right?"

"Perfectly—on the principle of the little hymn, 'If I never speaks to him (except on his 'ology), He never speaks to me.' I say—here he comes."

And Tyrawley sat down in a hurry at his table, while the doctor, amused at his unexpected display of simplicity, went to meet his friend.

Professor Otho Grenfell was bald, spectacled, gray, and mouldy; he looked fifty, and was thirty-eight; he was unclean as to his linen, and fragments of unpleasant substances contracted in his researches were apt to bestrew his garments. He looked dreamily at MacAdam, gave him a pale nod and three fishy fingers, then turned watchfully on his secretary.

"I hope, Mr. Tyrawley," he said, "you've recopied those forty paragraphs. They were quite illegible."

"Oh, he's been working like a nigger," said the mendacious MacAdam. "Takes a deep interest"—with a faint emphasis on the noun—"in your discoveries. But, my dear fellow," he

added, speaking in an undertone, and drawing the professor to the further window, "you look seedy—been fagging too hard in this cold room. Give that poor chap a chance, too ; he's got lungs, and he's getting to look like a plant grown in a cellar. You scientists forget you're doctors ; but he is a patient of mine."

"Oh, he's well enough," returned the professor snappishly. "Of course, I'm obliged to you for recommending him ; but he is a very slow writer, and misspells every technical word."

"I dare say, poor wretch," said MacAdam—"makes his head buzz, I expect, if it's all like what I saw just now."

"Do you think it unintelligible?" said Grenfell, awakened to anxiety. "Do you think the profession——"

"Oh, *they'll* understand it," said MacAdam disrespectfully, cutting him short. "By Jove !" he added, rubbing his hands, and turning to the empty fireplace, "*it is* cold. Have a fire, there's a good chap, and let's have a cup of coffee all round. Fireworks has nearly pulled my arms off, and that poor beggar looks blue. Let him off for ten minutes to get his circulation back, and I'll tell you what I've got for you."

"Very well," responded the other ungraciously ; but his eye brightened when MacAdam enumerated sundry grisly objects connected with his studies, and he became quite human and conversible over the coffee, and even, in the



warmth of his friendship, went with MacAdam to the hall-door.

"I say," said the little doctor, buttonholing him mysteriously, "if I were you, I should give Tyrawley rather a bigger salary—say fifteen shillings—or perhaps you'll lose his services; somebody else might outbid you."

"It's quite enough," said the professor warmly. "Any schoolboy, or a clerk in his spare hours——"

"Yes; but they would talk, and this fellow won't—he's a gentleman."

So Grenfell, who feared above all things that his great work should be anticipated, ungraciously made the proposed change, to the immense surprise of his secretary.

Lest Mr. Tyrawley's contentment with his new lot should appear unnatural, it may be remarked that a virgin soil is usually fertile, and the department of honest labor in his character had been hitherto uncultivated. Your adventurer often displays a childlike simplicity when entirely outside his own business.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DOCTOR'S ADMONITION

"I SAY, old fellow," said Tyrawley, meeting MacAdam a few evenings later at the Club, "I wonder if you'd do me a great favor—another, I mean."

He looked so sheepish that the doctor immediately became suspicious.

"Want another berth? Chucked up quill-driving?"

"Good gracious, no!" said Tyrawley. "On the contrary, even the professor owns I'm getting useful. No, old man, I want your opinion about a horse I've been asked to choose for a friend."

"I thought you knew all about gee-gees," said MacAdam. "I can testify you know how to ride them, anyhow."

"It's one of my large stock of useless accomplishments; but this is a much more important business, though it is not a purchase, only a job. It's not my neck that is in question, but a lady's."

"Fat, fair, and forty," said the doctor maliciously. "You stated, I think, that mild, middle-aged flirtations were your line."

The usually suave Tyrawley bit his lip and looked rather black. "No," said he, with constraint, "rather the other way. A young lady, almost a child."

Sincere emotions equalize character. The polished cynic, inured to self-control, failed to keep the tenderness out of his voice. MacAdam was amused, yet sorry, for he foresaw complications.

"It must be something quite safe," his friend continued impressively, "with good manners, and good-looking."

"People can pay, I suppose?" asked MacAdam, looking at him keenly. Even he could not expand to the idea of any sort of disinterested affection in the breast of Mr. Tyrawley. The latter perceived this, and replied rather gloomily in the affirmative. But gratitude and need alike prescribed meekness, and he presently added with considerable diffidence, and a rather entreating glance into MacAdam's little twinkling eyes:

"And if you'll let me, old man, I should like to introduce you, that you may make your report in person. They are nice people—not the least *my* sort—and I've told them you are no end of a judge, and—and I should like them to know I have one friend who isn't rowdy."

"Rather negative praise," laughed MacAdam. "Do you want me to report on the man as well as the horse?"

Mr. Tyrawley shook his head emphatically. "It would be a case of unsound all round," said he. "But," in extreme deprecation, "you might, if you would, say a good word for a fellow; nobody else will, if you don't."

MacAdam screwed up his lips in a whistle, half dubious, half compassionate, but he did not say no—perhaps he was curious—and an appointment was made for the morrow.

Tyrawley having got a holiday, the two men inspected the usual array of broken knees, broken wind, and queer tempers presented by Claretown livery stables. At last, however, a tolerably good-looking bay mare, with good manners and decent forelegs, a little touched in the wind (which was, MacAdam remarked, rather a comfort than otherwise, as it accounted for her being there), was selected, and it was arranged that she should be sent round to Cupola Square to be viewed.

"I'll send my man upon another horse, and the lady can try the mare at once, if one of you gentlemen can take her out," said the proprietor.

"*You* had better," said Tyrawley, rather faintly.

"Not I," said MacAdam, "I'm not a lady's man; besides, my dear chap, it wouldn't be friendly in me to cut you out."

The other smiled mournfully, but made no comment.

MacAdam soon made himself at home with

Mrs. St. Just, who afterward pronounced him "a charming man." He looked covertly at Nina and then at Tyrawley, both of whom had particularly little to say, and was somewhat puzzled. She was certainly pretty, but insipid and young—surely not sufficiently striking to account for the embarrassment of the usually fertile Tyrawley.

"If it were the money," reasoned the sage physician, "the fellow would have his wits more about him. If it's the other thing, poor chap, he's a perfect lunatic to think any thing can come of it."

The lunatic in question was of MacAdam's opinion, but he had not strength of mind to own it to himself.

Nina appeared in her riding-habit just as the horses were brought round, and the whole party adjourned to the hall-door to see the bay mare trotted up and down. Then Tyrawley, pulling himself together, deferentially suggested that he might have the honor of taking care of Miss St. Just while she tried the mare. Nina looked at her mother, received assent, and was presently put in her saddle by the doctor, while Tyrawley stood at the mare's head.

It was a brief and rather bewildered ride on both sides, though Tyrawley took care of her like father, lover, and riding-master rolled into one.

They exchanged scarcely a word or look, and

yet, when they dismounted at Cupola Square, there was a tinge of color on Nina's pale cheek, and an aspect of abstracted happiness on Tyrawley's countenance, which made the good-natured doctor uncomfortable, and prevented his enjoying the late St. Just's champagne as he would otherwise have done.

Tyrawley got into sad disgrace with the worthy professor that afternoon; and as the morning's beatitude gradually wore off, felt rather down, without daring to ask himself why. But love is like alcohol or sedatives; the only remedy for immediate inconvenience is more of it, and yet more. So he managed, with the instinct which is part of this form of madness, to obtain many stray interviews; on the parade, on the Downs,—when Parsons, the riding-master, took out Miss St. Just and Bertie,—in the public gardens, and elsewhere. Mrs. St. Just was very kind to him, because he looked ill, and sometimes sad. Bertie regarded him with admiring awe; and Nina, when under her mother's wing, talked to him with childlike freedom, but when alone scarcely spoke. MacAdam observed it all and became so uneasy in his mind that at last, after many misgivings, he made up his mind to broach the subject.

That we love those we benefit is true, but we also feel that we have a right to reprove them, if necessary; therefore, when Dr. MacAdam invited Tyrawley to his rooms one keen November night,



he did so with authority; and when Tyrawley obeyed, he came somewhat with the air your dog assumes when he knows that a thrashing is in store for him, and has not quite made up his mind whether to resent it or not.

He declined MacAdam's whiskey, perhaps that he might keep cool,—a professional gambler dare not be a hard drinker,—and he endeavored to look unconscious, as MacAdam, not much liking his job, began bluntly:

“I say, old man, how is this to end?”

“My work at the professor's shows no signs of ending, I am thankful to say.”

“Oh, it's no good fencing; you know well enough what I mean.”

“What?” said Tyrawley, drawing his eyebrows together, and looking rather wicked. “What's the row?”

“Don't get your head down to kick,” rejoined MacAdam coolly. “It's no good with *me*.”

“No,” said the other, with a melancholy sneer. “To carry out the simile, you've got the pull over me; go ahead, stick in the persuaders.”

“Don't be an ass! What I want to know is, are you going in for Miss St. Just?”

It was a home thrust. Tyrawley turned white and red, and gnawed his mustache, and MacAdam's professional eye noted the rapid, uneven rise of his coat at the left side.

“Poor chap! palpitations. It's a bad business,” he thought to himself, but continued, with

Spartan firmness, "That's what I want to know."

There was a long pause. At last Tyrawley said deliberately, in a low voice:

"I suppose I know what you mean. *No*." He looked MacAdam full in the eyes as he spoke.

"I mean," said the latter, rather indignant at what he considered a tolerably direct lie, "do you intend marrying that girl—if you can?"

"The proviso is necessary, if only out of respect to the lady, who may be supposed to have some voice in the matter. Am I in a position to marry any body?"

"That's an equivocation," said the persistent Scot. "Fellows do all sorts of things they didn't ought. What is the meaning, then, of your hanging about Cupola Square, and prowling up and down the parade? What is it all coming to? People are beginning to notice it, I tell you, and it isn't fair to the girl." He was standing up now in a denunciatory attitude, like a small, secular John Knox.

Poor Tyrawley writhed under this direct attack. "Oh, MacAdam," he said a little wildly, "do let me alone. I've never been happy in my life, and never really known a good girl till now. I'm doing her no harm; she's only a child. Besides, it will soon be over; they are going away next week, and it's a hundred to one if I ever see them again."

"But, man alive, she'll expect to see you!"

"No, she'll forget all about me, I—I—hope; worse luck for me! Oh, you don't know how I feel when I'm with her. I feel as though I were in church, in heaven—anywhere holy. One look at her takes all the wickedness out of me. I begin to understand that God is somewhere near; I've even begun to pray, in a sort of way. Don't laugh, MacAdam, you had a good mother."

"I'm very far from laughing," said MacAdam, half touched, half disapproving, "but it's a beastly tangle. I'm hanged if I see a way out." And he walked to and fro in the room, while Tyrawley sat motionless, with his hand over his eyes; and again there was a long silence.

At last the doctor stopped, and laid his hand gently on the other's shoulder. Perhaps some vision of youth—an old, disappointed dream—crossed his mind, for his tone was kind as he said:

"Well, it's beyond me. I'm sorry for you, Tyrawley—on my soul I am; but I can say no more except, don't entangle her in any correspondence, or ask her for any thing decided till she's a year or two older, and you're differently situated."

Tyrawley held out his hand silently, and a brief grip was exchanged. But alas! for the weakness of man's best resolves.

The excellent MacAdam was dismayed when, accompanying Tyrawley some days later to see

the St. Justs off from the Claretown station, he heard the latter give an eager and decided assent to an invitation to spend his Christmas quietly with them at Rooksholm, their place in Berkshire.

“And I’m sure,” said Mrs. St. Just, “we shall be so glad to see Dr. MacAdam for a few days.”

Tyrawley’s face fell. He dreaded those little, quick gray eyes, and that officiously candid tongue. His heart was too strong for his honor, and he could not help a long retention of Nina’s slender hand, and a yet longer look, wistful, with all the wistfulness of uncertainty, into her large grave eyes. He shook himself petulantly free of MacAdam’s admonishing consolation, and moped about the dull end of the parade till it was time to immure himself in the professor’s study.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE HAWK IN THE DOVE'S NEST

*Dr. MacAdam to Mr. Tyrawley*

“FAIROAKS, ESSEX.

“DEAR TYRAWLEY :

“Will you take enclosed note to my sister, get from her the key specified, get out the gun (which she, dear old girl, dare not touch to save her life), see that my man cleans it properly, and pack it off to me as soon as you can.

“Be sober and civil in your ways to Bess, for she and her old tabbies shake their heads over such as you, and she's a good old soul. The gun is not my only reason for writing; this is another : A cousin of mine, Mrs. Lane, is just returning to Claretown with her son. She is almost crazy because she has found out that this young cub of sixteen has been taken about by a late manservant of hers to billiard-rooms and low pubs, where he has got a taste for cue, balls, and beer; but, as she cannot bear to cross her darling child, and the darling child is as obstinate as a pig, she is fitting him up a billiard-room in their own house on the parade; and she wants to know if I could find any decent fellow who would come there and give her cub lessons in billiards as

played by gentlemen. So I have told her I know a person of unimpeachable morals and manners, who would, as a favor to me, do the needful coaching. She is rolling in money, and can afford to pay well, and is a good soul, not a screw like old Grenfell. Her number is twenty-five, and you can go and arrange with her any day after Tuesday.

"I want to hear how you are getting on generally, being a species of godfather to you in the path of humdrum respectability. Does Grenfell still keep your nose to the grindstone as much as ever? Tell me if, and what, you have heard from our friends of Cupola Square; likewise if *you* have written, which I hope you haven't, because it would certainly be the act of a fool, or something worse.

"This remark you must put up with; it is for your own good—all unpleasant things are. Weather and people here all that they should be; lots of hunting and shooting, and a tiptop cook. Let me have a long yarn, and don't shy off awkward subjects, or I'll disown you.

"Yours,

"ALEX. MACADAM."

*Mr. Tyrawley to Dr. MacAdam*

"ALONZO TERRACE, CLARETOWN.

"DEAR MACADAM :

"Thanks awfully for your letter. I can't think why you should befriend me like this. I



took the note at once to your sister, who certainly seemed rather alarmed; but I looked as good a boy as is in me, and was allowed to carry out your wishes under strict supervision. I cleaned the gun myself, so I know it is all right, and I hope you have got it before now. I have given my first lesson to young Lane, who is not nearly so much of a cub as the celebrated Poyntz, and treats me with a respect to which I am totally unaccustomed; but I don't think the boy is chaffing. His mother is awfully nice with me, and insists on far too high pay. Mrs. Higson is quite indignant at the punctuality with which I pay my rent, as falsifying her views of me; she stated that I had waxed fat and kicked. I asked if that was not scriptural. She replied patronizingly that it might be, but gave me to understand that the Little Elijahs had got considerably in advance of the Bible. The professor is much as usual. The day before yesterday he was so wrapped up in the book that he entirely omitted the trivial matter of lunch. He occasionally demands fragments of the skin of my arm, to which he seems to think he has a lawful claim. I asked what they were for, but the explanation was worse than the pinch. Still, from interested motives, I love and revere him.

“You ask me some home questions, old man, but I admit you have the right. I have not written to the St. Justs, perhaps for the reason you state, but Mrs. St. Just has written to me,

and I certainly mean to answer her letter, and I must abide the consequences.

“I also intend to go there at Christmas, for I never in my vagabond life spent a family Christmas, and I want to know what it is like. I don’t see that it is any body’s business if I like to burn my own fingers; there are some things so pure they can touch pitch and not be defiled; and if I do cry for the moon, the moon will be none the worse, and shine just as well for some worthier worshipper; which is a parable. Don’t think this is impudent cheek. I shall never forget your kindness to such a ruffian; but even a ruffian may have a touch of feeling, or sentiment, or whatever you may like to call it. I have got into an awkward hole by refusing to introduce one of my old chums and a wife he has lately taken to himself to the few decentish people I know here. She is all right, but he is such a rip, and such a howling cad as well, that I could not find it in the embryo I dignify by the name of conscience.

“Mrs. Warner (*née* heiress of Sawyer’s Hard-water Soap) and a shattered constitution having put a stop to Warner’s evil courses, she thinks he ought to be received with open arms by all, and bears me considerable malice for viewing things otherwise; but I must put up with results, if any, as part of my deservings.

“Claretown looks awfully sick to me, without Fireworks and her master. Old chap, forgive me

if I have said any thing wrong, or left out any thing right, and give me something else to do for you.

“Yours gratefully,

“I. TYRAWLEY.”

“Most potent, grave, and reverend Æsculapius!” said Tyrawley, removing his hat with exaggerated deference before the little doctor, as he appeared in the ticket-office, red and breathless from the struggle necessary for the transferring of Fireworks from one box to another.

“Oh, bother you! how are you? By Jove! that mare will be the death of somebody some day; we’ve been the centre of the admiring populace for the last half-hour; listen to her now.” And sounds, as it were of the trumpeting of a lunatic elephant, floated down the platform.

“I wish I’d come sooner,” said Tyrawley. “I could have hung on somewhere; but it has given you a lovely color, old chap.”

“You’re as great a fool as she is, it seems to me, to-day,” said the doctor, as he looked over Tyrawley’s shining face and admirable travelling costume. “Quite hymeneal.”

“Who wouldn’t be gay with a whole fortnight’s holiday from that ogre Grenfell, and the prospect of his first real Christmas?”

MacAdam looked at him curiously. “Well, I hope you’ll enjoy it,” he said, in a tone not devoid of misgiving. “It will be slowish, I expect.”

“To you, perhaps ; but as I have usually spent the festive season in lodgings, or—with other stray wretches who had been kicked out of their family circles—at a club, it will be all new to me.”

They proceeded on to the platform to await their train ; and there, and thereafter, Mr. Tyrawley's conduct rivalled, in a mild way, the lunacy of Fireworks, or of a boy set free from school.

He chaffed the porters, the guard, MacAdam's servants, MacAdam himself most of all ; he snatched the cigar from that worthy's lips, and transferred it to his own ; exchanged travelling-caps,—which had the result of bonneting the doctor, who was a small man with a conical head,—and, opening MacAdam's travelling-bag, proceeded to lay out its contents symmetrically on the opposite seat, with appropriate comments and quotations.

This last stroke was too much for MacAdam's patience.

“Here ! stop that conjuring, you egregious idiot,” he said, tumbling his property into the bag, and aiming a blow at the exhibitor's ear. “What on earth,” he added, “is the meaning of all this tomfoolery ?”

“I'm unusually jolly, that's all,” said Tyrawley with a smile and a sigh, and rather a look of appeal in those handsome, heavy-lidded eyes, which, MacAdam noted, had that peculiar clearness which is no index of health.

"If you were a Scotchman," said he grimly, "you'd know the meaning of being 'fey.'"

A gambler is always superstitious. "Oh, for goodness' sake, don't croak, you raven, and I'll check my indecent mirth, though you might give a poor beggar a chance. It's impossible to laugh at Grenfell's, except hysterically, or under the gas he administers."

"Has he been giving you *that*?" said Mac-Adam hastily.

"Yes, once or twice; he wanted to experiment, and I didn't want to put him out," rejoined the other carelessly. "Made me feel awfully ill, though, afterward; but I suppose it's harmless, isn't it?"

"Don't let him do it again. The old lizard would dissect his own mother in the interests of science. I told you, old man, that your heart wasn't very grand."

"Yes," said the other, sobered. "I suppose a fellow who has led my sort of life always has that organ in his mouth, more or less. You see your dinner and other necessities approaching or receding, which is exciting, and yet you mustn't show it; though, thanks to you, old chap, I'm grazing in peacefuller pastures now."

"Well, keep yourself as quiet as you can, whether jolly or otherwise, and you'll prolong your days."

"I want to prolong them for a fortnight," said

Tyrawley gayly. "And after that I don't much care."

"Stuff and nonsense," said the doctor testily. "One would think this train was taking us direct to Paradise."

"It is me, I know," said Tyrawley quite seriously.

"You're a sentimental mooncalf, and even more of an ass than when you were larking," said the doctor, getting quite angry; but he was mollified by the other's replying mildly:

"Put up with me, old man; it's safe not to last," and the conversation turned into more general channels till the train stopped at the Rooksholm station.

A smart brougham and a pair of chestnut cobs soon bowled them over the four miles of road which intervened between the station and the house.

Rooksholm was a big, comfortable, ugly mansion, from whose tall windows welcoming lights streamed through the early dusk of the winter evening; and when the open hall-door let out a further blaze of firelight, the figures of Mrs. St. Just and her children were revealed in the red glow, hospitably ready to receive the guests as they alighted.

"Poor beggar! your heart's doing a brisk bit of trade all to itself now, I expect," the doctor moralized inly, as Tyrawley scrambled out of the brougham, and, having greeted Mrs. St. Just,



held her daughter's hand for perhaps one second longer than courtesy demanded.

To MacAdam the warmth of the welcome, moral and physical, was a very ordinary business; but to the social brigand, who had hitherto only been received with suspicion, or the scant ceremony accorded to a doubtful detrimental, it was a perfectly new experience.

The country houses he had stayed in were mostly bachelor, or, at any rate, sporting quarters. At Rooksholm it was the simplest, kindest home life; no show, no scheming, no flattery; the servants seemed to make the guests part of the family; even a mongrel terrier, rescued by Nina from untimely drowning by the village boys, and a big gray cat, once a stray kitten, fawned and purred their welcome. There were only two other guests—an elderly young lady of neutral character, and a school companion of Bertie's.

"We expect my nephew, Mr. John Paget," said Mrs. St. Just, in a tone of some awe. "He is a very superior young man, quite the head of the family now my dear Matthew is gone, and we all look up to him very much, don't we, Nina?"

Mr. Tyrawley instantly conceived an unreasonable dislike to the person indicated, which was, however, toned down by Nina's dissentient silence, and the very slightest curl of her delicate lip.

Mrs. St. Just personally conducted the two men to their rooms, to cast a last glance of supervision as to warmth and general comfort. There was a door of communication between the two, at which Tyrawley rejoiced, but MacAdam groaned, foreseeing thinly veiled lover's raptures, protracted into the small hours of the morning.

The dinner, and the conversation thereat, were, like the welcome, homely and profuse: plans were made for the Christmas entertainment of the villagers, including the special delectation of Nina's Sunday-school classes of big lads and little girls, and "her sick," as Mrs. St. Just said, adding:

"That child *will* take up the very people that no one else will have any thing to say to—the bad boys and the poachers. Look at Tip," indicating the disreputable terrier; "that dog is a born thief; and the cat—she brought up that thing with a teaspoon."

"They want me most, mother," said Nina quietly, but with a faint color rising in her cheek, and a soft, steady light in her dark eyes. Those eyes met others, truthfully eloquent for once, and did not droop, but rather dilated, which MacAdam perceived and regretted.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A RANK IMPOSTOR

DAYS of bright, still winter followed—bright and still without and within ; walks, and rides when the frost was not too hard. Bertie possessed two miniature Shetlands, small and mischievous as himself; his sister owned a big dark chestnut—a lion in the field, a lamb in the stable—whom only her light hand and familiar voice could subdue, but which would trot after her all over the grounds like a dog. Every-body rode except Mrs. St. Just, who plainly stated herself to be too fat ; and naturally, the four grown-ups divided into twos, the doctor soothing the alarms of Miss Hewlett, and Tyrawley schooling, at Nina's side, a fine bay colt, which was to be her hunter next year. To be with a woman who did not know how to flirt, to chaff, to speak lightly of right or wrong, or laugh at a careless joke, was a further new experience to Mr. Tyrawley. Nina was schooling him, without her own knowledge or his, quite as much as he schooled the colt, but with less harmless results, though neither pupil nor teacher was at fault. When riding was impossible, there was skating on the private lake

in the grounds; and here Mr. Tyrawley came to the front, for he was a master of the art, as, indeed, he was of most social accomplishments. He enjoyed his own proficiency for the first time when Mrs. St. Just urged him, in moving terms, from the bank, not to let go her child's hands.

"Not for a minute; for, you know," she remarked to MacAdam, "she must marry well some day, and no man would like a wife with a broken nose."

"But Miss Nina can please herself, surely," said the doctor. "It's only tocherless lassies, as we Scots say, who go a-begging."

"Oh, Nina has no money to speak of," she returned. "It all goes to Bertie, with Rooksholm."

The doctor communicated the fact abruptly to Tyrawley, looking at him with a keen eye meanwhile. At first he received it quite blankly, then a slight, tender, melancholy smile touched his lips.

"What's the grin for?" said the doctor, puzzled.

"Nothing. Of course, it's ridiculous in any case; but if there *were* a chance——"

After which fragmentary eloquence he broke away from his mentor. Later, there were long country walks on sunny mornings, and in early twilight; sometimes through solemn pine-woods, when the soft susurrus of the wind murmured an accompaniment to simple, quiet talk; some-

times across a brown moor, to a low, thatched bird's-nest of a cottage, where an old deaf shepherd, a special friend of Nina's, was bedridden.

Tyrawley carried a somewhat heavy basket, from which even the good-natured doctor revolted, with servile joy, and sat with untiring patience in the little cold parlor, while Nina chatted with her invalid, and read by turns Bible and newspaper. She had to read loud, and Mr. Tyrawley heard her ; and some of that Bible astonished him quite as much as it might have done a native of the Caribbee Islands ; for both Mrs. Higson and his former landlady had relied rather on their own eloquence than on inspiration. His naif remarks rather amazed MacAdam, who had been scripturally brought up, and was at first inclined to think that Tyrawley was poking fun at him, when he made such an observation as, "It seems to me sinners have a much better chance in the Bible than out of it," etc.

He never spoke to her thus, for he well knew she would think far better of him than he would deserve, if he did ; and she had roused in him an honest shame, if nothing else. In one of these walks he caught a slight chill, and being thereafter heard to cough suggestively, was immediately taken in hand by his comfortable hostess, and made a glorious invalid of, being installed in the softest arm-chair beside the fire in the morning-room, where Nina did her village accounts and kept up Bertie's lessons ; and being waited

on, and read and sung to, by the family generally, to whom, as to most nice people, an invalid was a sovereign, *pro tem*.

The doctor sniffed scornfully as he looked on from afar, and gave his friend a bit of his mind after they retired for the night, standing with a hairbrush in his hand in the open doorway which separated their rooms.

"You're a nice fellow!" he said. "A rank impostor!"

"True," murmured Tyrawley.

"Sitting, turning up your eyes," continued the doctor, "because you've sneezed twice in twenty-four hours, and letting those dear women coddle you like a baby."

"I enjoy it," said the other, leaning back with a lazy smile. "I never was coddled before."

"Why," said the doctor, coming in and leaning on the mantelpiece, "instead of being seedy, I believe you've actually put on flesh since you've been here."

"I'm sure I have; I never felt so well, or was so happy in my life."

"It may agree with your constitution to be happy," said the doctor, "but it certainly doesn't improve your brains. Such a perfect fool at whist I never saw; you used to play a good game. And as to billiards, it's disgusting, and an insult to a man's common-sense, to do so much as look at you now. Look at that game last night. Why, you let Miss Nina lick you to fits."



"Do you think I could beat *her*?" said Tyrawley.

"Well, a lady; but Bertie, he's a boy, and a cheeky young dog."

"*Her* brother; and she wanted him to win."

"Oh, you fool! You double-dyed, unmitigated fool!" cried the doctor, rendered quite desperate by the other's look of dreamy satisfaction. "What is it all coming to? Are you making up to the girl, or what do you expect?"

"I expect," said he, with a rather melancholy smile, "to leave here in ten days, worse luck."

"If it were my house," said MacAdam, "I'd kick you out to-morrow."

"Thanks. What for? Omitting to swindle my hostess's children, as I've swindled everybody else?" He spoke quite amiably and seriously.

"Yes," growled MacAdam, "because the omission *is* swindling in *you*; looking so precious innocent, when I believe you were born with a cue in your hand and a card up your sleeve—and for making love to your hostess's daughter."

The stray shot told. There was a fiery spot on Tyrawley's cheek, and his indifference vanished as he answered, staring up doggedly in the doctor's face, "I don't make love."

"Looks uncommonly like it, hanging over her at the piano, and howling sentimental songs in that confounded tenor that sounds like honey and butter."

"MacAdam," said Tyrawley, suddenly stand-

ing upright and looking with considerable earnestness in the other's perturbed face, "I give you my solemn word, if you'll take the word of such a disreputable rascal, that I haven't said a syllable to her I couldn't have shouted across the dinner-table—and, what is more, I won't."

"Well," rejoined MacAdam slowly, rather mollified, "I'll take it, as far as the past is concerned; but as to the future——" and he shrugged his shoulders. "Besides," he added, "you're rather a good-looking scoundrel, with a fallen-angel, 'Lucifer-son-of-the-Morning' sort of look girls admire, and love comes without making, sometimes."

"She looks upon me as an old man, and a superior species of poacher."

"Superior humbug!"

"And as to me, it's

" ' The desire of the moth for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow,  
The longing for something afar  
From the sphere of our sorrow.' "

"Oh! good Lord, *poetry* now," groaned MacAdam. "I've heard of the devil quoting Scripture, but when it comes to poetry!"

"Poor devil!" said Tyrawley bitterly. "Well, let him alone; in ten days he'll return to Hades."

"Well, I'm no party to it, remember. Good-night," said the doctor shortly, and he went

away muttering, divided between pity and wrath.

That same evening Mrs. St. Just called her daughter into her room, with a disturbed countenance.

"Nina," she said, "just listen to this. I've had a letter from your cousin John. I told him about the two gentlemen we had staying here, and what a charming man Mr. Tyrawley is in a house, and this is what he says." And she read, as the Mrs. St. Justs of earth do read, without punctuation :

"I am somewhat sorry, my dear aunt, you should have two men, with whom I am quite unacquainted, staying in the house, on such a necessarily intimate footing with yourself and my cousin Nina. However, some friends of mine know this Dr. MacAdam, and I find there is nothing against his character. The other name you mention occasions some slight uneasiness, for I have a faint impression that I have heard it mentioned in any thing but favorable terms by a Mr. and Mrs. Warner, with whom I became acquainted at a Conference of the National Reform Society, and a Breakfast for Bettering Ballet-girls without Religion, in both of which excellent undertakings I am interested. I have written to them begging for any particulars they can give or gather, and hope to be able to report the result personally on my approaching arrival

at Rooksholm. Meantime, my dear aunt, I need scarcely point out the necessity of extreme caution, especially as my dear cousin is now——'

"H'm—yes, dear, that's all. Oh, what an excellent young man he is!"

Nina was silent a moment. Then she looked up, a bright flush on her usually pale cheek, and a very distinct flash of indignation in those eyes which had generally a rather angelic aspect—"radiant and grave, as pitying man's decline"; though, indeed, as angels, we are told, rejoice over repenting sinners, they may be supposed to feel a celestial wrath at any discouragement of a sinner's repentance.

"I don't think it is excellent to try and hunt up things behind a person's back," said she, in a very mortal manner; "and I don't believe any of it is true."

Now, this might have been alarming in an ordinary girl; but Nina's little foible for all things weak or attacked was recognized in her family. That slim, white hand had been known to descend with no uncertain sound on Bertie's ears when he had tied a cocoa-tin to Tip's tail; and it was still narrated with admiration in the kitchen how Miss Nina, at five years old, had got on a chair to slap the cook for skinning eels. A remembrance of these episodes reassured Mrs. St. Just, and she merely said, in mild remonstrance:

"Oh, my child, your cousin John knows best."

Mr. John Paget's name was proudly mentioned by his aunt at lunch next day, and his photograph was produced for the inspection of the unconscious Tyrawley, who, nevertheless, conceived an instant and warm aversion to the original. He was a long-bodied and short-legged young man, with a high and narrow head, deep-set eyes, and insignificant features.

"John," said Mrs. St. Just, pensively contemplating his interesting physiognomy, "is too proud to wear a mustache."

"Where does the pride come in?" said Tyrawley, with a laugh.

"He is proud," said she gravely, "of the St. Justs' mouth. Bertie has it too."

"I *haven't*," said that young gentleman defiantly—"have I, Nin? Mine ain't a button-hole like that!"

"No, darling, you *haven't*," said she, impressing a kiss on the feature in question, as he hung over her shoulder.

"But my nephew John," said Mrs. St. Just, "is quite unlike all other young men; so beautifully steady, and interested in the welfare of the working-classes."

"Does he take your class in Sunday-school, Miss Nina?" said the doctor hastily. He saw a wicked look in Tyrawley's eyes.

"No," said she sedately. "I'm not sure that John believes in Sunday-school, except as the

proper thing for girls to do in the country. The 'proper thing' is John's religion."

Mrs. St. Just paused aghast, with a fragment of cutlet on her fork.

"My dear child," she cried, "what are you talking about? But there, you'll appreciate John better when you're older, and so will Bertie."

"I hate him now," said that young gentleman candidly. "He wanted Tip drowned, but Nina got in such a wax, and I said I would keep on sending him dead rats by post if it was done, so he gave in. Oh, I say, mother, give me a lot of that apricot tart."



## CHAPTER IX

### AN UNPLEASANT EXODUS

CHRISTMAS EVE was a busy time indeed at Rooksholm ; there were church decorations, in which Mr. Tyrawley, with the deft and flexible fingers of a *chevalier d'industrie*, excelled himself, but wherein he still found time to wait upon Nina hand and foot, and undertake all the hard and disagreeable bits for her.

There were mysterious parcels to be tied up in dark and secret corners, more open preparations for village gifts. There was a pleasant half tea, half supper, after all the work was done, in the big dining-room, at which every-body sat down just as he was ; and, lastly, there were the carol-singers, who were quite an institution at Rooksholm, and among whom Nina's boys figured prominently. When their heavy feet were heard tramping on the gravel of the drive, and they arranged themselves in a half-circle round the hall-door, Nina went and stood there, in the keen, frosty starlight, with all the imprudence of seventeen ; and Tyrawley, with all the imprudence of first love at three-and-thirty, followed her, while the others were content to listen from the side of the great wood fire.

It was one of those magical nights of winter when every star seems like a diamond-point piercing the vault of blue. No breeze stirred the trees, silvered by frost ; only the breath of the singers melted in soft clouds into the transparent air ; every thing was silent, except for the singing. Even Tip, sitting on his tail at his mistress's feet, only protested by an occasional shiver, and an expressive upward look. The Rooksholm choir was rich in treble—those sweet trebles, whose unconscious, sexless sweetness must surely come nearest to the first Christmas song. By day they were apple-cheeked, and in some cases apple-stealing, boys, but in the dim glow of the Christmas starlight they were muffled seraphs. Nina heard them, as she had so often heard them before, with a soft sense of love and peace, intensified this Christmas Eve by a new touch of—what was it—pain, pathos, pity ?

But to the civilized heathen, standing a little behind her in the shadow, it came almost with the force of a Divine revelation. The new thoughts and desires, the stray notes of hope and love, long floating through heart and brain, crystallized into faith, almost into resolution. His heart beat fast, his eyes filled.

“Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled,”

seemed an individual proclamation to *him* ; and, as the carol-singers tramped round to the back

entrance to receive substantial reward, he turned with a strange and child-like simplicity to his companion, and whispered low, scarcely knowing that he spoke it, the reply of his heart, "*I will* try to be good."

She held out her hand. He took it, paused—but that vow seemed in some sort to have purified his lips, so that they might venture the lightest and most reverent touch as the seal of the pledge. Then they returned to the fireside circle, surrounded by a heavenly starlight of their own—a half-divine, half-human tenderness—which nobody else saw.

"Your cold," said the doctor by and by sarcastically, to Tyrawley, "seems decidedly better, or you couldn't stand outside at midnight with the thermometer down to zero."

"Don't chaff me to-night, old man, please," said he, with meekness. "I don't feel like it."

The doctor took a long look at him, nodded sagely, and retired. What was his unbounded astonishment when, coming in later to borrow some toilet appendage, he found the gentlemanly billiard-sharper of Claretown on his knees. He retired hastily.

"Bless us and save us!" he muttered, for his own relief. "Honesty, Bible, poetry, and now prayers! and all for the sake of a girl of seventeen, who scarcely opens her lips; and, 'pon my soul, I believe the poor chap is in deadly earnest!"

There was a Christmas sun of pale gold on the

Rooksholm breakfast-table next morning, and, beside the appropriate decoration of china bowls of Christmas roses and holly, sundry parcels adorned every plate. Their contents, save in one or two instances, need not be particularized. Every-body gave every-body something. Tyrawley, in the gladness of his heart, divested himself of almost all his limited portable property in the way of sticks and riding-crops, in favor of Mac-Adam, Bertie, and Bertie's chum; reserving his spare cash for the box of lilies of the valley, white rosebuds, and Neapolitan violets, which were his offering to Nina—to tell the story he dared not speak. On his own plate lay "Hymns Ancient and Modern," bound in white vellum, strewn with gold stars of Bethlehem, with one line inside—surely a harmless inscription—"Mr. Tyrawley, with Nina and Bertie's grateful love." Some instinct made him turn to the Christmas pages, and somehow he was not in the least surprised, though touched and thrilled, to see a faint pencil-mark and a date against "Peace on earth."

No one but Mrs. St. Just was glad to hear that Mr. John Paget was due about lunch-time.

There was a pleasant progress of Christmas greeting through the village, and then church, to which every-body went. There was one person who felt as if he had never been in church before—he had not very often. Last night's carols seemed to float like angels about the dark

arches of the old oak roof, and all was bathed in a still, snowy, ineffably pure radiance, of which Nina, in soft white stuff like new-fallen snow, with a little swansdown hat crowning her fair hair, seemed the very font and centre. They sang together from that new book of his, and consecrated it forever. Her voice partook of that soft and quiet strength which was her peculiar characteristic. They prayed shoulder to shoulder; they listened side by side to the old, old message, that yet falls like dewy balm newly dropped from heaven on the heart of every sinful, sorrowful mortal who is willing to receive it.

Tyrawley, for his part,—soul, hands, eyes,—could only repeat the rudimentary prayer of the night before. He looked it so much that Mac-Adam had not the heart to chaff him, as they stood together among the graves in the quiet, green churchyard, where drifts of snow still lingered in shady corners, and where the large white clouds cast fleeting shadows as they sailed overhead. A robin was singing on a tombstone, so close that they could have touched it, and the last notes of the organ dismissing the worshippers pealed gently out on the still air. Then the St. Justs, who had been exchanging greetings with neighbors, came out and joined them, and they walked quietly back, as people generally do to catastrophes.

Nina was stopped to receive some rustic Christmas gift from her scholars, and Tyrawley stayed

with her; so the rest of the party got home ten minutes earlier, and were greeted in the hall by Mr. John Paget, who, after receiving introductions to the doctor and Miss Hewlett, rather abruptly announced to his aunt, in an undertone, that he must see her at once on important business, and she accordingly led him, looking rather scared, to the morning-room.

Ten minutes later they entered the drawing-room, where MacAdam and Miss Hewlett were, in a sort of procession; Mrs. St. Just, much flushed and disorganized, leading the way, carrying an open letter in her hand; Mr. John Paget following, with high head and protruded underlip, and a photograph, face downward, in his hand. The two seated themselves with a judicial aspect on a broad, red silk sofa, and the aunt heaved a fat sigh, and cast a half-imploring glance at her nephew.

At this juncture Nina appeared, and had scarcely met her cousin with a cool handshake, before Tyrawley, his usual sarcastic suavity softened by his new happiness, followed her.

No introduction was performed between the two men; instead, John Paget looked meaningfully in his aunt's face, and muttered:

"Better get it over at once."

"Nina, come here!" said her mother. Then, as the girl obeyed mechanically, she added, the color on her plump cheeks dying in red streaks, "Mr. Tyrawley——"

She tried to speak further, but her voice failed her.

Tyrawley, who had risen when she spoke, and was standing suave and cool awaiting her pleasure, saw that glance, and, with the instinct of an animal that has been hunted before, stood at bay. His features were expressionless, except for that courteous smile; but MacAdam's sharp eye saw a slight distention of the nostril, and a faint blueness round the mouth, which told of the rapid throbbing of his heart.

Mr. John Paget cleared his throat. "Well," said he, in a cold, monotonous voice, looking up in the other's face from where he sat, "of course, this is a most unpleasant business, Mr.—er—Tyrawley; but it has to be done, and I suppose, as the only man of the family, it falls on me."

"I don't quite understand," said Tyrawley, stroking his mustache. "Perhaps you'll explain?"

"I'm going to. My aunt, Mrs. St. Just, has just been informed, on undeniable authority, that you are not a proper person to be received as a guest under her roof, and she wishes me——"

"A moment," said Tyrawley, speaking with his usual languid coolness, and turning with a smile to his hostess. "Is Mr. Paget authorized by you to deal with this matter?"

She nodded, avoiding his gaze.

"I presume, then," he continued, staring full in his enemy's face, "the information has been



obtained and brought by you, probably in that letter. May I ask if that photograph is another piece of evidence against me ? ”

Now Mr. Paget had expected bluster, confusion, possibly servility, over which he should loftily triumph; and he was annoyed by the calmness of the criminal; so he retorted with a more offensive accent than before:

“ Precisely. The letter tells us the truth about you, and we identify you by this photograph. ”

Nina rose mechanically to her feet, but her mother put her arm round her waist, and drew her down with an angry “ Be quiet, child ! ”

Two burning spots began to appear on Tyrawley’s cheeks, and his eyes flashed; but he spoke with even exaggerated languor.

“ Thanks,” said he. “ Now be good enough to tell me who are my accusers, and of what I am accused, before Mrs. St. Just turns me out. ”

That lady murmured, “ Dear, dear; this is distressing ! ”

Her nephew responded with a sneer:

“ Look here, my good fellow; it’s of no use coming this sort of thing with a man of the world. Of course, ladies are tender-hearted, and get taken advantage of in consequence by adventurers. Your accusers, as you call them, are Mr. and Mrs. Warner of Pirley Park; and the accusation is that you are a card-sharper, play too good a game at billiards, and get your living by your wits and the follies of others. ”

"May I ask," said Tyrawley, "if you know the character of one at least of your informants—I mean Warner?"

"I know that he belonged, in some measure, to your own set, but he has reformed; besides, there's such a thing as king's evidence."

"Yes; his wife's fifty thousand pounds has reformed Jack wonderfully. I suppose it has not struck you, when you were digging up my bad past, that I might reform too?" A touch of melancholy softened his bravado.

"Oh, don't let's have any of this rubbish! I've got proofs!"

"Produce them," said Tyrawley.

"I will," said the other. "Mind, it's your own doing." He took the letter from his aunt's shaking hand and read aloud:

"'The man I mean was years ago caught cheating at cards in a gambling-house; the affair was so bad that even *they* kicked him out. I enclose his photograph, and you will know it is the same scoundrel by his having a scar on his right wrist, caused by a scald from some boiling water from a kettle over a spirit lamp—there was liquor going on as well as play—which somebody threw on his hand to make him drop the card he was concealing.'

"Would you," said Mr. Paget, with a slight smile, "mind showing us your right wrist?"

Tyrawley hesitated, looked round as a hunted animal looks for escape, then, with a laugh, stretched out his hand, where, at the wrist, a slight discoloration and contraction appeared. There was a pause. The doctor fidgeted uneasily. Bertie sat open-mouthed and rather tearful; his sister like a statue of ice.

"Well," said Paget, "this is all very disagreeable. Hadn't you better go?"

"In case you send for a constable? Yes," said Tyrawley. His eyes turned for a single instant on Nina, and he added, moistening his dry lips with his tongue, "There's one fact my kind friend did not mention. Every one here has been awfully good to me till now, and it might go for something. I was only a boy of seventeen when that affair happened, and my own father's catspaw. That's all."

He drew himself up to his full height, looked round, without looking at any body in particular, bowed with a rather spasmodic smile of general adieu, and taking from a vase, as if absently, a lily spray he had given Nina that morning, quitted the room.

"I say," Mr. Paget called after him, "you can pack your things up, you know, and I dare say my aunt will send you to the inn in the pony-cart."

"Thanks," returned a faint sarcastic voice. "I'll manage my own exodus."

The company looked at one another. Mr.

Paget said it was particularly unpleasant; Miss Hewlett and Bertie sniffed a duet; Mrs. St. Just wept, still clutching her daughter, who sat as if petrified; the doctor gave a long, low whistle, walked about the room aimlessly, muttered, "Hang me if I can stand this," and departed to seek Tyrawley.

## CHAPTER X

### ADRIFT

HE found him in his room; he had evidently begun to pack, and a portmanteau, half-filled, was on the ground; but when MacAdam entered, he was leaning his arms on the mantelpiece, and his forehead upon it.

He tried to resume operations when he heard a footstep, but his shaking hands refused their office. He turned round, however, and said, with attempted formality :

“Dr. MacAdam, I hardly expected——”

“Oh, confound it all!” said the doctor; “don’t ‘doctor’ me. Bless my life and soul, man, do you suppose I’m going to turn the cold shoulder on you for what you as good as told me months ago? If that Pharisee is perfect, I’m not. Might have been a lot worse than you if I hadn’t had a good mother. More shame to me for doing her so little credit. Hold up, old man, you’ll live it down if you keep a stiff upper lip.”

But the performance inculcated was quite beyond Mr. Tyrawley. The revulsion of feeling was too utter. His eyes strained, his lip trembled, and he caught the mantelpiece for support.

“Hallo !” said MacAdam, whose eye detected certain physical symptoms. “Steady there, steady! If you don’t hold your tongue and sit down quietly for two or three minutes, you’ll have as pretty an attack of palpitation and syncope as ever I saw;” and he guided him to a chair, put him gently in it, and after a hurried plunge into a drawer in his own room, produced certain drops, which he administered with a remark that they would help Tyrawley to leave the house without loss of dignity.

The latter was for the moment mercifully past such considerations, for he lay faintly gasping, while the doctor watched him with a kind, anxious look.

“Yes, poor chap; I know it’s bad, but you ain’t going to die. You’ll be better presently, and a seat behind Fireworks in this blessed east wind will set you all right. Yes,” said he, in answer to the other’s enquiring and grateful glance, “I’m going to drive you to the station myself, for I expect you won’t want to hang about the village, waiting for the pony-cart. That’s the worst of these new people; they must do a disagreeable thing in the nastiest way. I should like to punch Cousin John’s head. Now I’ll send to my man to bring the mare round, and I’ll pack your traps meanwhile. Couldn’t give me the trouble? Oh, bosh! you’re too ill, man. Keep your strength to make a good exit.”

Forbidden to speak, Tyrawley pressed the



other's hand, and looked up in his face in a way which made the good-natured little doctor blink and state that he had a touch of catarrh.

"Feel better, old chap?" said MacAdam, as he snapped the key in the lock of the last portmanteau.

"Oh, yes, thanks; all right," said the other languidly. "But——" A look of dull misery settled down on his face.

"But what?"

Tyrawley hesitated. "I shouldn't mind so much," he said, "if any one had said a word, or seemed to mind. Doesn't really matter, of course. It's only a sentiment."

He was trying to harden himself, but this is most difficult when you are physically down.

"You fool," said MacAdam, easily reading between the lines; "do you expect a girl of her age to throw herself into your arms, and vow to live and die for you? Don't you know a nice girl never does those things? You wait. I'm very much mistaken in that young lady if she lets you go away without a word or a sign. And if she does—by Jove! old man, I'll tell her when I'm writing to you, and ask her for a message."

"My *dear* chap," said the other, "you're too awfully kind."

They saw nothing further of the inhabitants of Rooksholm except the footman, who opened the door and helped to put in Tyrawley's portman-



teaus; and who, being a country-bred footman, showed emotion, and wished Mr. Tyrawley a happy Christmas in return for his parting tip.

"Precious happy!" said that unlucky person, as they drove off through the mists and chill of the early winter evening. "My Christmas has been knocked on the head, after all," he added bitterly. "What's the good of trying to do better? 'Once a rip, always a rip.'"

"Nonsense!" said the doctor. "Every-body isn't as cantankerous as that young squaretoes. Don't give up."

"I don't know," said Tyrawley gloomily. "'Peace on earth and mercy mild.' The mildness and the mercy don't seem to come my way much."

They drove on through the gathering shadows; but, a little way further, the doctor suddenly uttered a low whistle, and pulled Fireworks up short; a slim, white shape, ghostly in the twilight, stood on the turf under the trees.

Mr. Tyrawley did not need the doctor's "I told you so," to quicken his perceptions; he leaped out before Fireworks stopped prancing, and was at Nina's side, breathless.

She spoke first.

"I came," she whispered, lifting her large eyes, full of unshed tears, to his, "to tell you that if that and the other things they say are true, I am only very, very sorry; and—and—will you please try as you promised yesterday?"

He hesitated an instant; he knew well what that promise would mean, smarting from the shame of his expulsion from Rooksholm; not the heroic victory the inexperienced girl pictured, but a sore, sordid struggle against small slights and privations; scorned by the bad, shunned by the good. Still that upward look, the half-pitying, half-proud tremble of that sweet mouth, the very perfume of the lilies he had given her, were inspiration.

"Yes," he said, though it was not without a sigh; "I don't go back from it."

"And I," she whispered, coloring faintly, "will ask God to help you. I shall never, never forget you, because you saved my life."

"Only for that reason?" said he. Forgive him—he was weakened by the prospect of instant parting from the only human creature who had ever shown him a particle of love.

"Not *only*," she answered. Then the voice of MacAdam made itself known, with a remark that the only train possible left in half an hour, and Fireworks could not do it in less.

So Tyrawley took that slender hand, which had lifted him at any rate one step out of the miry clay of sin, held it a moment, dropped it gently, and turned away. But the sound of a faint sob conquered his prudence; he returned, took it prisoner again, murmured passionately, with wet eyes:

"Do you know what I shall ask you for in

heaven? I shall ask you for my heart!" Then he found himself, he hardly knew how, by MacAdam's side in the trap, assenting vaguely to that worthy's remark of sage sympathy, that "Life was not all beer and skittles."

"You'll be sure and write, won't you, old man?" said he, as they stood together on the platform, after the doctor had insisted, with professional obstinacy, on regaling him with coffee and sandwiches from the hands of a peevish Hebe who felt it hard that people should travel on Christmas Day.

"Oh, yes, I'll write; and I shall take particular pleasure in sitting on that prig at every available chance. I'll take him out," said the doctor, with a chuckle, "for a spin behind Fireworks, and tickle her a bit. If he don't know the fear of man, he'll know the fear of horse from that day."

Tyrawley's heart was too sick for amusement, or even for the delight of vengeance; and he replied to MacAdam's question of "What will you do with yourself when you get to Claretown?" with a heavy, "Go to bed, for want of any thing better; and tell old Grenfell to-morrow that I have come round to his opinion that holidays are waste of time, and I am ready to get into the collar again."

"I must say it's a beast of a Christmas for you, poor chap," said MacAdam; "but let us hope things will brighten." Then the train steamed

away, and the doctor went back to Rooksholm in a very unholy temper.

He was, however, much sustained and comforted by Nina's demeanor toward her cousin during the evening; of which he immediately wrote off an account to Tyrawley; which, unluckily, owing to Christmas postal disarrangements did not reach him for some days. It may, however, be given here :

“I had an awful lark this evening, in seeing Miss Nina extinguish her cousin finely. During the afternoon she turned her shoulder to him whenever he addressed her, and answered him, when fairly obliged to speak, with the extreme tip of her upper lip and the top of her eyebrows, as scornful young ladies can when they choose. After dinner in the drawing-room, when only he and I were present, he had, I suppose, had enough of it, for he walked up to her with a patronizing air (for which I could have kicked him, only it was needless) and said, ‘Come, come, Nina ; you should have sense enough to thank me for ridding your mother’s house of a——’ My word, but my lady blazed out in a white fury; I never saw her look so handsome before. She looked him straight in the eyes and said, as if she were stabbing him, ‘John, I hate you; and if I had been a man instead of a girl, it’s you who would have been turned out of Rooksholm, not he. If you say one word more against him, I’ll never speak

to you again.' Most girls would have cried, or been hysterical after that outburst; but, bless you, there wasn't a tremble of a nerve; and I don't think, old chap, you'll need a champion when that damsel is anywhere round. Mrs. St. Just is not half bad, if she wasn't cowed by that ass. She has been dissolved in fat tears at intervals during the evening, and told me she hoped some clergyman or missionary society might take you up and send you abroad."

## CHAPTER XI

### SONG OF THE SIRENS

THE Little Elijahs of Alonzo Terrace, having got, in spiritual things, quite beyond the old-world faith of keeping Christmas, Mr. Tyrawley, arriving cold and famished at half-past eleven, P. M., found the house dark and silent, save for the sleepy blasphemies of his landlord, who had enlivened the general gloom by getting roaring drunk early in the day. No refreshment was, therefore, possible; so the lodger carried out his own programme, and went to bed.

His last waking thought, as the first cold gray of the winter dawn struggled in, was that, although God and sinners might be reconciled with a simplicity which he had thought impossible, it was altogether a different case with a sinner and his fellow-man. He awoke in alarm, rather late, with a hot head, shivering limbs, and an ominous tightness about the chest, but accounted to himself for these symptoms by his long, cold journey; and started with a resolved, if sad, heart for the professor's, at his usual hour.

A damp sea-fog made that dull abode at Greytown even duller than usual; nevertheless, it



seemed something like entering a haven of refuge after a storm, when he found himself seated once more at his table, with the familiar prospect of the pebbly strip of garden before him, and the professor's strident voice dictating scientific terms with monotonous rapidity.

Grenfell had received him with cold satisfaction, as a man might welcome the unexpected return of a useful machine ; but, whether from the fact that Tyrawley had come away without breakfast, because he feared to be late ; or that love and leisure had impaired his brain-power, the human machine worked ill, and the professor got very cross.

"Really," he said, as Tyrawley looked at him with a hopeless, "I beg your pardon"—the third in five minutes—"you're very dense to-day. Any boarding-school boy could spell 'epidermis,' I should think. You have been all the morning over one short chapter, and now it must be full of erasures.

"I'm awfully sorry, I'm sure," said Tyrawley, in alarm. He was prepared to be hectored to any extent rather than lose his footing on this one solid stone of honest work in his storm-tossed ocean. "I have a beastly headache, that's it ; but, if you like, sir, I can make up for my stupidity by coming for an hour or two in the evening."

The professor accepted ungraciously, and presently set his amanuensis to recopy half the



chapter, while he smoked reflectively at the fire-side. A letter was presently brought to him, which he opened and read. Tyrawley heard him fluttering its pages, and muttering to himself. Then he looked up, and said, in an aggrieved voice, "Mr. Tyrawley."

"Sir."

"I want to speak to you." Tyrawley stood up, and turned with respectful meekness; he felt that his situation was precarious. "This letter is about you. It's most extraordinary that MacAdam should have deceived me so."

Tyrawley's color rose. "I'm sure," he said, with warmth, "Dr. MacAdam never deceived any body willingly. Kindly tell me to what you allude."

"To his recommending you."

"Thank you, sir," said Tyrawley, with a laugh. He began to see how things were going, and was trying to harden himself, but he felt sick at heart.

"Oh, it's useless taking that tone," said the professor angrily, "when this letter, from a gentleman I am well acquainted with, tells me you are an unfit person to have in my house, or trust with valuable secrets; that you are known to be in the habit of cheating fools at cards, and pigeoning young men of property."

"I know who that *gentleman* is," said Tyrawley. "Mr. John Paget. I thank him for his kind offices."

"That's not the question," retorted the pro-

fessor peevishly. "I suppose what he says is true ; but I think it's very hard that a scientist should have his studies interrupted by such trifles."

Tyrawley had grown pale with mingled shame and indignation ; but a thought of the eyes which had looked so pleadingly into his, through the winter twilight at Rooksholm, nerved him to a last effort. It was possible there might be a man somewhere under the professor ; so he said, almost with entreaty :

"Suppose I say it *is* true, or rather, has been, but that I'm struggling now to earn an honest living? Suppose I ask you, Dr. Grenfell, as man to man, if you won't give me another chance, by keeping me on a month, at a reduced salary?" His heart beat fast, and his head swam, for the professor hesitated. He tried to push his advantage. "I have done nothing to be ashamed of here, at any rate; it has been faithful service, though I dare say I have been stupid enough. MacAdam knows all about me, and he would speak for me as to that."

"Well," said the professor, slowly rubbing his bald head, "it's very disagreeable, and highly inconvenient to me, and sadly interrupts the calm of scientific research; but I think, Mr. Tyrawley, you had best go. I shouldn't feel that confidence—let me see, I only owe you for to-day—that's about two shillings and three halfpence," he fumbled in his pocket. Tyrawley's spirit was

broken by despair, but the professor's tendered sixpences and coppers were too much for him. He said under his breath :

"All right, sir. Perhaps you'll explain to Dr. MacAdam that I didn't discharge myself. Good-afternoon," and left the room and the house.

It was dusk; the sea-fog had been driven away by a bitter north-easter; the streets and squares were almost deserted; people were hurrying home to fireside and afternoon tea; but he no longer had any desire for food. His head felt rather wild now and then, as he tramped wearily along the wind-swept streets. Curious fancies, from Heaven knows where, of a fireside and a home awaiting *him*, lifted the leaden weight of despair from his mind. They were so curious that he shook them off in alarm, and resolved on a course of action, in pursuance of which he swallowed a cup of coffee at a cheap back-street restaurant to steady his nerves; and thence made his way to the big house on Claretown Parade tenanted by the mother of his boy-pupil in billiards.

It seemed to him when the radiance and warmth of the well-lit hall burst upon his chilled senses, and the footman, with a look half of curiosity, half of pity, said, "Mrs. Lane is not at home, sir, but here is a note for you," and tendered it, that he had known all along what was going to happen.

It contained a check and a polite dismissal.

It swam before his eyes, and he looked so ashy pale that William the footman (Mr. Tyrawley was always popular with domestics, because of a certain easy royalty of manner) asked him if he would not sit down in the study for a minute and rest.

"I've got another note for you, sir," he added, lowering his voice, as Tyrawley shook his head, and sank on a hall chair. "Mr. Harry told me to give it to you, but his ma don't know."

"DEAR TYRAWLEY [it ran], I think it is a beastly shame of the Mater to stop my billiard lessons, just when I was getting on so well with the spot stroke, because that duffer Paget, who doesn't know a billiard-ball from a marble, has told her a lot of confounded crams about you. I told her you talked to me like an archbishop about swearing and barmaids, but it was no go. I have tipped William half a dollar to give you this, so that you should know I ain't in the swim, but am, your affectionate pupil,

"HARRY LANE."

It was a good thing that Tyrawley's heavy mustache hid the trembling of his lips; though William was a sympathetic witness. He got up with effort, declining the offer of a glass of wine.

"Say to Mr. Harry, 'Thanks and good-by,' for me, will you?" said he, putting on his hat, and he passed out into the darkness.

It was very dark now, and colder than ever, but he made his way down to the parade, and sat down on a seat close to the edge of the low sea-wall. The white fringe of foam of the outgoing tide was indistinctly visible in the gathering night shadows ; but the rattling of the small pebbles, drawn back by each retiring wave, was audible enough. Though the sirens of the sea no longer appear in human shape to fascinate men, their voices are still audible to mortals, under certain conditions, and lure them to their doom. They had cast their fascinations over Mr. Tyrawley, and he could scarcely tear himself away from that dark gray shield, with its ragged edge of silver, and low, moaning invitation.

Rooksholm and Nina, even MacAdam and Fireworks, seemed very far off and dim, in comparison with that sight, and life a most wearying and foolish struggle.

"I shall come back," he whispered to the sirens, but there were things to be done first. He dragged his aching limbs up from the seat, and fought his way through the wind to Alonzo Terrace, making plans as he went—or, rather, a plan, for it was simple to a fault. The song of the sea was in his ears when, surprising Mrs. Higson by the levity of his demeanor, he stumbled upstairs, requesting her, from the landing, not to disturb him for a time, as he was going away that night, and had to pack.

"Is any thing the matter?" said she, eying him severely.

"Far from it, my dear lady : I'm sure you'll agree that all is unusually well when I turn over this check to you, and request you to expend the change, after taking what I owe you, in sweets for Higson, junior, and the healing soda-water for your husband." And Mrs. Higson smiled grimly.

Mr. Tyrawley entered his room, and his proceedings were somewhat curious. He first opened a writing-case, and destroyed its contents with the exception of a small envelope with a not very remote date on it, which he placed in his breast pocket. He then took one of the port-manteaus he had brought from Rooksholm to the nearest pawnbroker's and, with a lightsome air, pledged it and its contents. He returned for the other, and repeated the performance. He now spent all the money he had just obtained, at the same shop, in the purchase of a malacca cane of price and a small ring of singular design—a black enamel heart with a small diamond in the centre—which had taken his fancy. Then he again returned to Alonzo Terrace, asked for candles, and sat down to write. He paused long over his first epistle, which was very short, and in which he enclosed the ring, directing it to "Miss Nina St. Just." He attached a label to the malacca cane, with MacAdam's name, and wrote a longish letter, to be hereafter chronicled. As to the first one, it only said :

"I have failed, but not because I have not tried. I am not worth praying for any more. Accept this, it is black enough to be my heart. Perhaps you can guess what the diamond might have represented. I shall never ask you for any thing in earth or heaven, except to forget that there was ever such a person as

"INFELIX TYRAWLEY."

He held his head hard, and occasionally laughed as he finished his letter, and Mrs. Higson was very much astonished, and rather scandalized, to hear him singing a fragment of a Christmas hymn as he ran down stairs.

"Oblige me," said he, "by allowing your son and heir to register and post this letter, and take the other to Dr. MacAdam, Corunna Place, after school to-morrow morning. Impart this sixpence to him, and assure him from me that his copy-book is correct in stating that honesty is the best policy. Did you hear me singing, Mrs. Higson?"

He was certainly queer in manner.

"I heard," said she doubtfully, "'Peace on earth and mercy mild.'"

"Well, I'm going to test that theology. The second line may be an improvement on the first. Good-night."

She looked after his retreating figure. The Little Elijahs are neither a very sympathetic nor a particularly intelligent body, but they are human.



"I think," she said to herself, "I'll post one letter, and take the other myself to-night. There's no peace for the wicked, and perhaps they feel it themselves at times."

So, half an hour later, she assumed a rigid bonnet, and went out on her errand. Meantime Mr. Tyrawley had proceeded to Cupola Square. Here he stood for a few minutes, looking up at a dark and silent house tenanted only by a caretaker; then struck across the parade, down on to the solitary beach.

All along the sea-front lights were flashing from the great terraces—dinner parties, home circles, gatherings, carriages rattling along the wind-swept road; for winter is the season at Claretown. There was not another soul on the beach as far as he could see; a few faint stars glimmered overhead, but the moon cast only a dim, gray gleam through the masses of cloud driving fast overhead; the sirens were singing far out, and very softly, for the tide was still receding across the sand.

Before Mr. Tyrawley followed it he did a strange thing: he selected a number of biggish pebbles from the strand, and dropped them into his pockets. Then he strolled out across the wet flat, and climbed over the low rocks to their extreme point near the tide, just on the turn.

He found a convenient spot, a few feet of sand hidden from the beach and parade by a weedy reef, and here he took off his hat as if he were in

church—perhaps he was, in fancy—and knelt down. In that posture he took a hymn-book, bound in white and gold, from his pocket, laid it on a ledge of rock, rested his cheek upon it, and waited. Perhaps he prayed; perhaps he only wondered; sometimes a wonder may be a prayer. The tide began to come up, and the first cold swish of it on the sand sent a mortal shiver through him, although the sirens were singing their loudest.

Wave after wave drifted up. It was not so cold now. He put his hand on the hymn-book to keep it dry as long as possible; the stars came out gently overhead; the wind murmured in a softer key. It was, he thought, a great deal better than the infirmary, and perhaps, as he had known so little of these matters, the One who knew so much—all—about him—even that affair which had left the scar on his hand when he was seventeen—would consider that, and other things.

The moon came out with sudden brightness, sailing in a great blue space overhead; it shone on his face, calm, wide-eyed, smiling, for he was no longer on the Claretown beach, under the cold night sky, but in a country church, in the fair sunlight of a Christmas morning. Mercy ! Yes, there *was* Mercy.

## CHAPTER XII

### IT WAS THE BODY OF A MAN

“BROTHER, a person named Higson wants to see you. Rather a rude woman. She says she has a letter for you from that Mr. Tyrawley,” said Miss MacAdam, pinching her lips.

“By Jove! how did the beggar know that I had been sent for to attend to that old ass Methuen’s tenth fatal attack of gout? Send her in.”

She came, and remarked, without formal greeting, “He said it was for to-morrow, but he seemed in a strange way, and I thought it best—the Little Elijahs having Special Intimations—to bring it to you to-night.”

“And you were uncommonly prudent, ma’am,” said the doctor. “Oh, bless my soul!” he groaned, as he ran his eye quickly over the last incoherent lines. “This is a serious matter. Which way did he go?”

“Down toward the sea,” said Mrs. Higson, with a gasp.

“Oh, Lord!” said the doctor, “I hope we sha’n’t be too late.” He snatched his hat, and tore out like a madman down the parade, tossing the letter

to his sister as he passed her, with a fierce, "There, that's what your gossips, male and female, have done. Get hot water, blankets, and a roaring fire, will you? Though, confound it! I'm afraid it will be too late."

She replied with many dismayed ejaculations. This was the letter:

"DEAR MACADAM:

"It is all up with me. Paget has written to the professor, and he has dismissed me; and to your cousin, and got me kicked out there too. I don't know why he should hunt me down like this. I never hurt him.

"It's no good, old man. All your kindness will never do any thing for such a poor, unlucky wretch as I am; but I know you won't give me up, so I am going to give *you* up. That's funny, isn't it? I do feel awfully funny. I have written the same in a few words to Miss —; but, mind, I don't want her to understand all *you* will understand when you have read on.

"Make her think me a rogue, there's a dear, dear chap, or she might grieve her sweet little heart too much over my troubles—the rogue I am, in every thing but my love for her and gratitude to you. Keep the malacca in remembrance of the cur with a bad name you tried, in vain, to save from the social gibbet.

"I suppose it is all right. I deserve my fate, but I did not *choose* the wrong road. I was pitch-

forked into it before I knew the right one; and now I want to get out of it, nobody but she and you will let me.

“What can I do? I cannot get the only job I am fit for, without a character; and if you give me one, you only get in a hole with your friends for taking up a blackguard like me. I would try being a laborer, but it would land me in my bug-bear, the workhouse infirmary, in three days. I suppose a diet of alternate pheasant, Perigord, and champagne, and penny cocoa and stale rolls is not exactly the thing to build up a robust constitution upon; particularly when you live with your heart in your mouth, on the turn of a card, or the roll of a ball, and sleep by turns in Alonzo Terrace and swell hotels—or, as the French say, *à la belle étoile*.

“No, old chum, I have faced it out. I can’t go back to the old life; I hate it so. Slow starvation is the only alternative. There is no room among decent people for me, and I have done with my own set forever.

“Excuse blots; my hand won’t do what I want it, and I am getting to feel wonderfully light about the head. To continue—my fellow-creatures evidently won’t hear what I have to say for myself, because, I suppose, they have never been in my place. There was a song or a hymn I heard Miss — sing, which keeps running into my head—‘Despised—rejected—a Man of sorrows—we hid as it were our faces from Him.’ I

thought at the time that it was I. T., but it has been slowly dawning on me of late that it means something quite different, and far above my comprehension. If I were talking to you, I might ask you to try and remember what your mother said about it ; but as it is, I think I will go and see for myself, and ascertain if He will not give me a hearing, if nothing else.

“I remember something to that effect being said at Rooksholm church on Christmas Day, and also something which she read to that old shepherd across the moor, about a fellow’s sins not being so much as mentioned to him if he gave them up.

“The beginning of the Church Service was always a source of astonishment to my mind—‘When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.’

“The wind and the sea seem to be repeating these things, and it is so cool and still out there when one’s head and heart burn.

“If I am doing the wrong thing it will be of a piece with the rest of my life; but *don’t*, DON’T let her know. I think I have courage—or cowardice, whichever you like to call it—to wait till the tide of death comes up and blots me out—a very poor inscription. I have taken precautions against reappearing involuntarily or causing a scandal. I know the currents about

Claretown pretty well, and the sands will be better than a pauper's coffin, and—who knows?—God kinder than men, except you.

“If she should question you, tell her I have emigrated to a new country, which is no lie. I would have lived and tried to do you credit, but Paget won't let me. Good-by, God bless you, dear old man. When you get this there will be nothing else left of,

“Yours affectionately,

“INFELIX TYRAWLEY.”

As MacAdam hurried, scarcely knowing which way to go, along the parade, through the fitful wind and the cloudy moonlight, a man, running rapidly from the opposite direction, cannoned against him.

“Hallo!” said the doctor, disengaging himself. “Seem to be in a hurry.”

“I want the nearest doctor,” said the man breathlessly.

“Well, you've caught him,” said MacAdam, a wild hope flashing across his mind. “What's it for?”

“I'll tell you as we go.”

“Keep on running, then,” said MacAdam. “Though I'm fat, I've sound lungs.”

“Quick, then,” said the other, “for God's sake, or we shall be too late. They *think* there's life in him. It's a gentleman. Two fishermen had been out to see that their groundnets were



all right, and found him lying on the rocks, the sea washing over him."

"Tall, fair, good-looking?" asked the doctor.

"You've got him, sir."

"I believe I have," said MacAdam. "Thank God! Let's put on a spurt."

They were pulled up short by the appearance of four fishermen stumbling up the sea-wall steps, with something in a sail, which they laid on the esplanade when they saw the messenger had returned. It was the body of a man, cold, drenched, and with the still features set in a calmer, sweeter peace than Mr. Tyrawley's face had ever worn in his life.

The doctor was down on his knees on the gravel beside him in an instant, with his hand on heart and pulse, using violent language to the crowd who had instantly swarmed round. He uttered a sound of relief—his practised ear and finger detected the feeblest flutter of life.

"We give him brandy, sir," said a bystander, "but it run out of his mouth again."

"Of course it did," said MacAdam; "might have choked the man. Give me the flask."

He rubbed a little on the lips and temples, explaining to the spectators that his patient was not drowned, but fainting; borrowed all possible wraps, sent a boy for a fly, and anxiously watched the effect of restorative measures.

They were successful. There was a slight flutter of the eyelids, the eyes opened widely,

and met MacAdam's with a gaze of blank disappointment. A faint, weary smile touched the white lips.

"It's too bad of you," Mr. Tyrawley whispered, as the other stooped lower. "I wish you wouldn't." Then he relapsed into unconsciousness.

The fly drove up, Tyrawley was tenderly transferred to it, and MacAdam, with instructions to the coachman to drive like mad, carried his patient home.

Miss MacAdam was tearful, but practical. One perusal of that letter had converted her from distrust to entire sympathy, and Tyrawley was soon ensconced in the best bedroom, with every heat-producing appliance in the way of blankets and hot bottles, and MacAdam sitting by him with a finger on his pulse; while Miss MacAdam hovered round with propitiatory offerings of beef-tea or jelly.

"Yes, old girl," said MacAdam, "we'll pour in the nourishment like one o'clock when we get the chance, but we've got to proceed gently. The poor chap's dead-beat, body and mind, and, if I'm not mistaken, in for pneumonia, and perhaps for rheumatic fever as well."

"You'll keep him here, of course," said she anxiously.

"Will *you*?" said the doctor grimly. "Remember his character."

"I wonder at you, brother, when the poor

young man is so ill. If he were the very worst——”

“There’s the hospital,” said the doctor.

“I’m ashamed of you, Alec !”

“God bless you, Bess,” said the doctor, with a chuckle. “He’s coming to in earnest now, and so is fever. All right, old man, lie still.”

Mr. Tyrawley made several incoherent remarks to the effect that he didn’t know where he was, and it didn’t matter so long as he was out of the way; and he couldn’t spell “epidermis,” because his head ached; and would the professor excuse him till to-morrow, or stop people from singing Christmas carols in his ears, and chucking billiard-balls over his chest, because it hurt; and it was impossible to teach the game that way; and it was a great pity to bring him ashore, because heaven was ever so much nearer on sea than on land, and the seagulls paid no attention to Paget, and he was despised—despised; and where was his hymn-book, and he wanted, *wanted*!—with his voice rising to a pathetic cry.

“Steady, steady !” said the doctor, laying a kind hand on his hot head. “The hymn-book is all right, and you’re at my diggings; and I’ll punch Paget’s head, if he comes within a mile of you; but you’re going to be rather ill, so you must just resign yourself to be looked after by Bess here, and me, for a week or two, and not bother your head about any thing. Eh, Bess ?”

Miss MacAdam stroked the long, white hand

that lay passive on the down quilt, in token of amity. Tyrawley looked from one to the other gratefully, and accepted the prescription without further protestation than a faint, "Oh! it's too——" which collapsed in the saying; and closed his eyes with a long, broken sigh of relief.

## CHAPTER XIII

### "I AM DR. MACADAM'S TONIC"

MR. TYRAWLEY'S mind had overruled his body tyrannically for some time, conducting it with bewildering rapidity from the heated idleness of the Club billiard-room to the chilly drudgery of the professor's study; had starved it and feasted it; indulged and enslaved it. Now, that ill-used body rebelled, in the form of a sharp attack of pneumonia and a slight touch of rheumatic fever. He lay wandering in the anxious mazes of delirium, with burning spots in his fallen cheeks, and eyes, as the doctor said, as big as saucers. His ravings were the piteous, ridiculous realities not often reported in print—past, present, future, jumbled up.

But through all there ran a thread of pathetic protest against the world's bitter charity, and a continual plaintive refrain, that nobody cared for him, or would have any thing to say to him, except MacAdam, whom he always knew after a minute, and to whom he would cling like a child to its mother, when an imaginary army of Pagets stood pointing the finger of scorn at him round the bed; or when, in the night watches,

that "conscience toward sin," which all men have, took dark and visible shape, and made him tremble and cry imploringly for a light and a hand.

"Alec," said Miss MacAdam one day, in a perplexed tone, as they met at lunch, having left the housekeeper (MacAdam had a most unprofessional disbelief in hired nurses) in charge of the patient. "Alec, it's a most extraordinary thing, seeing what he has been, but I can keep that poor man quiet with the Bible when nothing else will do it."

"It is odd," said the doctor. "I do believe myself, if the poor lad had had a mother and sisters, and a decent home, he would have turned out a Sunday-school teacher or a parson."

"He may yet," said Miss MacAdam oracularly.

The doctor sighed and looked serious. "If the delirium keeps on, and we can't get in any more nourishment," he said, "I'm afraid he won't turn his hand to any thing more in this world. I think I shall get Keir to come and look at him. I want another opinion, and he's great on pneumonia."

Miss MacAdam wiped her eyes. "I really can't help getting fond of him," she said apologetically. "If he is so bad as that, I don't think I shall go to bed to-night. He is so gentle and patient, and you never hear a wrong word from him."

"Yes," said the doctor, "the agreeable good-for-nothings generally make far better patients than your solid, reputable men of business. They've learned to put up with things."

Late that evening Mr. Tyrawley was not better, but worse, and MacAdam, coming out of his room looking very careworn, said to his sister, "Stop in there a bit, while I send round a line to Keir."

"Is he so very ill?"

The doctor nodded gloomily, and ran down stairs. Dr. Keir soon appeared. He was a student of the same year at St. Matthew's as MacAdam, and at the top of his profession in Claretown. He screwed his lips up when he saw Tyrawley, with eyes half closed, and moaning very quietly under his breath. A long medical council was held, which ended in MacAdam turning away with a very red face, and saying in a whisper, with a choke in it, "Oh, *you* tell him; I can't." But a faint murmur from the bed, a dim smile, and two wide-open eyes of sunken brightness greeted them as they approached. Miss MacAdam had slipped gently in, and stood there too.

"I know," he whispered. "Far best—God's kindness—awfully undeserved—but I didn't know—such a sin—this is so much gentler—than the sea—or the workhouse—Friends," putting his long, bony fingers weakly toward MacAdam. "Bible!" with a glance at his sister. "I should



like," he added more strongly, "somebody to pray."

They looked at one another. "I'll get a Prayer-book," said Miss MacAdam; but the doctor shook his head, and, kneeling down with Tyrawley's hand in his, began, "Our Father," in a husky voice.

Those great and tender words, first taught by the Man of love and sorrow to His fellow-men, fell like dew on that stray and wounded sheep. He followed inaudibly till they came to the clause, "as we forgive them," paused, glanced with a faint smile in MacAdam's face, said—half to himself, as if answering a question—"Paget—yes," and concluded the prayer; then released his clasp of MacAdam's fingers, murmured a gentle "Thank you," to the three standing by, and relapsed into unconsciousness.

It was morning. The cold, gray dawn was widening when MacAdam, looking haggard but relieved, met his sister, who had just risen from a snatch of perturbed sleep in the passage. "I think he'll do now. I'll go and have a shave and a cup of coffee, if you'll watch him; and keep pouring in the beef-tea as fast as you can get him to take it. Give him a crack over the head if he says a word." And the little man ran into his room jubilantly.

Tyrawley was out of danger; but some weary weeks followed, trying both to himself and to his friends. He received the announcement that

"he was not going to die this time," with a mournful elevation of the eyebrows, and a muttered—"It seems a pity," which earned him a lecture from Miss MacAdam, which he received with meekness, but an evident absence of conviction. He was not irritable, unthankful, disobedient; but he was hopelessly depressed. Scolding, planning, cheering alike failed to rouse him, and he seemed, after the first, really to gain no further strength. He lay all day with his wasted hands straight out on the coverlet; staring with dull eyes, and anxious lines on his forehead, at the same spot on the wall. His weak voice had but one level note of sadness; his very cough was tired and hopeless. The doctor lost his temper at last—"Rouse yourself—swear, do something, for goodness' sake; for I've done all I know."

Tyrawley turned languidly toward him, not appearing in the least vexed, or even hurt, "Yes, old man," he said. "I know I'm an awful dead weight; I was going to speak to you about that, only, I suppose, I hadn't pluck."

"Well?" said MacAdam hopefully.

"Well," said the other deliberately, "I think you had better tell the workhouse people you've got a sick pauper you want them to take off your hands. I mean it, MacAdam. I can't go on living on you any longer; you'd better do it. You'll come and see me sometimes, I know."

"I'll be blowed if I do," said MacAdam.

"Why, you idiot, you'd be dead in a week, and all Bess's nursing and my professional services thrown away. You have patience, and you'll come round."

"No, I sha'n't," said Tyrawley peevishly, putting his hand over his eyes; and MacAdam went out quite desperate. He happened to meet Grenfell, and relieved himself by pouring the vials of his wrath on that scientist, who blinked at his diatribes like an astonished owl. Then he betook himself to his friend Keir's consulting-room, and they talked the matter over professionally and unprofessionally.

"The only thing," said the latter, stroking his beard reflectively, "that I can see, is to give him an agreeable shock. Has the poor chap got any relations who have sent him to Coventry, whom we could persuade to take him up now?"

MacAdam shook his head, considered frowningly, then slapped his knee. "By Jove! I'll do it. It isn't fair, I suppose, but, hang it! we can't let the fellow go on like this. There's no relation," he added, "but there are friends who, if I were to bring them suddenly into his room, I believe he'd——"

"Who," said Keir, with a gentle sneer, "is *she*?"

"Never mind," said MacAdam. "I'll do it, see if I don't, if all Claretown turns its back upon me. I know she is in the place, because my man,

who was staying at her people's with me, saw her." And he bustled off.

Some weeks earlier, on a wild, dull December morning, Nina St. Just was starting for an early visit to a sick child in the village, when she encountered the postman and received from that functionary, who had perhaps some inkling of how matters stood, Tyrawley's packet and letter. She knew the hand, and some intuition of trouble made her turn aside into a quiet spot among the trees, where she read that brief and sad epistle, which was her first love-letter. With the extravagance of youth she made a silent vow it should also be her last, accepting the farewell as final, in her young ignorance of the uncertainty of all things ; and learning the alphabet of a woman's lesson, to sit still and face a sorrow. Hers was not a nature to go down under a blow, but rather to take up the burden in steadfast pain ; so, when she had put the letter in her pocket, with a thought of a narrow gold chain which she had, which should sustain the ring round her neck, and so closed her love story, she went, all the same, to pay her visit. She was, if any thing, more tender and thoughtful than usual, though a little pale, and with a touch of strange, sad light, which blotted the childishness out of her eyes. She went straight into the morning-room on her return, with her head rather high.

"Mother," she said, in that low voice which

betrays a deeper wound than the wildest scream, "Mr. Tyrawley has written to me to say that he's going quite away, and to wish me 'Good-by.'"

"Oh, thank goodness!" exclaimed Mrs. St. Just piously. "For what between such a charming man turning out so, and John making me do my duty, and you looking like a martyr at your mother, and like a tiger-cat at your cousin, I've had no peace nor rest. Let me see his letter, child."

"I'd rather not, dear; but it is put just as I tell you;" and Nina retired.

"That girl is the picture of my man," said Mrs. St. Just; "and, gracious knows, I never understood him to his dying day."

Nina took her sorrow with perfect calmness, but grew even paler and stiller than before, and acquired a habit of paying stolen visits on week-days to the little church which Tyrawley had helped her to decorate, and where they had knelt side by side. The melancholy light of his presence seemed to linger there, enshrined by her prayers for him. But memory without hope is not a robust diet, and about this period the local doctor remarked, when attending Bertie for some childish ailment, that his sister seemed to have outgrown her strength, and that their return to Claretown for a month or so would be desirable for both.

Mrs. St. Just was annoyed, for she was just engaged in gorgeously redecorating the drawing-room, according to the latest æsthetic prin-

ciples. So she finally decided, the dangerous Tyrawley having been driven clean out of Clare-town by the judicious tactics of Mr. Paget, to send the children to Cupola Square in charge of an old nurse of Nina's who lived in the village, following them herself in a week or two.

And thus it happened that MacAdam's groom had seen Nina and imparted the fact to his master.

"Bess," said the doctor, with a twinkle in his eye, and an instrument-case in his hand, "I'm going to experiment on our patient."

"Not with those horrid things, I hope?" said she. "You and Dr. Keir are always saying he has no rallying power whatever."

MacAdam left the room with a mysterious air, and returned in two minutes in high glee.

"I think we've hit it now," he exclaimed. "That was only my preliminary gallop."

"What did you do to him?" asked she distrustfully.

"I inserted," said the doctor, "a small instrument through the ear to the heart, and it sent his pulse up twenty per cent., and made him look as if he had some red blood in him somewhere, after all. I'll tell you what it was,"—seeing her hopeless bewilderment,—"I mentioned a young woman's name, and I'm going to exhibit her as a powerful stimulant—get her in to see him. It will be all right and proper, as you're here, Bess."

"Miss St. Just, I suppose?" said she; but she offered no opposition.

"Dr. MacAdam would be glad," said a temporary domestic, appearing at the drawing-room door in Cupola Square, "if you could see him for a few minutes, miss."

Miss St. Just was not supposed to receive male visitors in her mother's absence; but a middle-aged doctor, a former guest at Rookholm, might be considered a safe exception, so he was admitted. He eyed Nina rather curiously, for he saw a subtle change in her: a shade of higher sorrow had replaced the cloudless, child-like peace of her countenance.

"I suppose," said he abruptly, after a casual remark or two, "you've forgotten that poor scamp Tyrawley?"

He noticed with satisfaction the indignant curve of her lip, a slight drawing together of her delicate brows, as she answered, "Mr. Tyrawley was *not* a scamp, and I remember him perfectly."

The doctor chuckled inwardly, and contradicted himself without shame. "No; he was a nice fellow, in spite of what he had done wrong. You wouldn't, I suppose, care to see him?"

Nina thrilled a little, and fixed her large eyes with earnest enquiry on his. "But Mr. Tyrawley has left Claretown."

"He must have been uncommonly quick about it, if he has," said the doctor dryly, "for I left



him at my house an hour ago." She looked at him with parted lips and a slight, proud entreaty. "Yes," said the doctor, leaning back in his chair, and staring at the ceiling, "he has been through a lot, poor beggar, since your cousin turned him out—pneumonia, rheumatic fever, nervous prostration—— What, Miss St. Just?" She was standing beside him, her slender fingers on his arm.

"Oh, tell me—is he—is he *dying*?"

"Oh, no," said the doctor, rising and patting her hand gently, "the danger's all over; but the poor chap is terribly down, and we can't pick him up anyhow; and I think if a certain young lady would look round at my house for half an hour some afternoon, it would do more than all my physic."

A deep blush stole over her cheek, up to the roots of her fair hair, but she looked full in his face as she said, "Shall I come now?"

"You're a good girl," said he. "God bless you! No, I think to-morrow will be best. I must get him up a little, in mind and body, to receive visitors. Of course," he added kindly, "you'll find him a good deal changed, and as thin as a whipping-post. All eyes and bones, and not a word to say for himself; so you'll have to do the talking."

"I can do any thing that will do him good. And I don't care, Dr. MacAdam," she added proudly, "what any body says."

"I was going to ask you," said he, "if you did. Your mother——"

"Mother is my step-mother, you know," said she; "and she does not understand."

"Well, my dear girl," said the doctor, rather moved, "if you'll come to my house to-morrow at three o'clock, I think you'll save a man's life. Bring Master Bertie with you, as a sacrifice to propriety, and Bess will amuse him, while I look after you and the patient. No, I sha'n't stop, because I've given you plenty to think of. Three, to-morrow." And he took his leave.

Next day the doctor appeared to his passive patient to have gone out of his senses. He hunted the maid to and fro, as she "did" the room, whistled Scotch reels with the greatest energy, and even executed a step or two. He insisted on bringing a barber to shave Tyrawley, and cut his locks.

"Those ambrosial moustachios of yours," said he, "are awfully run to seed; and there's a velvet coat of mine, I think, we could get you into. Any thing will fit a skeleton."

Tyrawley groaned and submitted, as he submitted to every thing. He would have allowed himself to be carted off to the infirmary with equal indifference. When, however, he was finally let alone, he enquired, with languid curiosity, more as a concession to the doctor's excitement than because he felt any interest in the matter himself, "What is it all for?"

"Wouldn't you like to see old Grenfell?" said the doctor mendaciously. "I think a visitor or two would do you good."

"It would tire me awfully," said the sick man. "But it's as you like. They'll find me a precious interesting invalid."

"Your society is not enlivening, I must own," said MacAdam; "but there's no accounting for tastes. Look at the shocking manner in which you've wormed your way into poor Bessie's affections. You humbug! She looks upon you now as an injured martyr, and lectures me if I suggest that your conduct is in any respect whatever short of angelic."

"Yes, I am an awful trouble, old man. If you'll let me——"

"Dry up now," said the doctor, "and eat your dinner like a Christian for once, instead of picking at it like a canary bird. No wonder you're such an object, now you're shaved."

"Please, I eat all I can."

The doctor grunted, and retired to complete his plans, while Miss MacAdam administered chicken and jelly with feminine patience.

Later on, MacAdam entered with a medicine glass in his hand, whose contents he gave Tyrawley, answering his languid "What, an extra dose?" with a sarcastic, "Yes; I want to tone down those lovely cerulean hues in your complexion."

"Grenfell won't mind; except that he's always

interested in any body's cuticle," said the sick man. But the doctor had disappeared again, after taking a long look round, and saying carelessly to his sister :

"Bess, I want you for a minute," while Tyrawley relapsed into his normal state of quiescence.

Half an hour elapsed. There was a ring at the front door, and, shortly after, MacAdam appeared, with an air of exaggerated indifference, which his friend was too spiritless to do more than observe.

"Are you prepared for the professor?" enquired the doctor.

Tyrawley turned his half-closed eyes toward the door in weary assent.

"Get a welcoming smile ready then. Here he is." And the doctor retired hastily, and Nina stood in his place. Tyrawley gasped heavily, gazed, and put his shaking hands over his eyes, withdrew them, gazed again; then, with an inarticulate cry, half unbelief, half tenderness, stretched them out toward her as a child stretches toward its mother. It was with something of a mother's gesture that she came to him, took those faltering fingers, and drew his sinking head against her slight, firm shoulder, and, feeling how faintly and wildly his heart throbbed, whispered, half playfully, though her voice was full of tears :

"*I am Dr. MacAdam's tonic.*"

"The Elixir of Life," he murmured. "But this is madness ! Grenfell turned me out, and your mother, and MacAdam's cousin, and the

very sea wouldn't have me. There's no place in the world for me. Why do you come? Out of pity?"

It was a hard thing to say, but those big, feverish eyes, those hollow cheeks, with a faint, burning spot in each, that fragile, hopeless wreck, which was all that remained of the gay and gallant Tyrawley, pleaded more eloquently to a nature like hers than all the music of the poets. She stooped gently down.

"No, not pity."

"What, then? Say it, because I can't believe it."

She answered his appeal, lifting her head and looking him straight in the eyes.

"Out of *love*," she said.

There was a pause. He drew her hands to his lips with a certain consecrating solemnity, and said, though his breath was scant, and joy almost choked him:

"Then I will live to thank you, and God, and be a better man."

Perhaps the next half hour is best left unchronicled. To people who have never known any thing like it, and the sacredness of love that has trembled on the verge of parting and death, it might appear tedious; and those who have known it can realize it better by their own heart's memory than by another's pen.

It is enough to say that they understood each other, without explanations or vows.

MacAdam presently put his head in at the door with a keen look at his patient, which was followed by a broad, satirical smile, which put Tyrawley out of countenance.

"Well," said he, "will you go to the infirmary now?"

"Yes," said the other, "if Miss St. Just will come and see me there—there or anywhere."

"Can you have patience with this sentimental idiot, Miss Nina?" said MacAdam. "But I know you will. There's a sort of provision of nature, or Providence rather, for fellows like him. A well-conducted person like myself stands no chance. Now, I'll allow you," said he, taking out his watch, "in my professional capacity, half an hour—not a minute longer. So, during that time, you had best be practical."

"Yes," said Tyrawley—his eye was bright and his voice firm—"we will."

"Got your plan?" said the doctor sceptically.

"I have, if Miss St. Just approves."

"Well, then, I'll leave you to discuss it. Mind, only half an hour. I dare say your heart's half over the place as it is."

"No," said Tyrawley; "it's where it has been since last September."

"Oh, good-afternoon!" said the doctor.

A very serious talk followed, in which Mr. Tyrawley displayed a rather unexpected degree of firmness, which even Nina's mournful looks and anxious objections failed to shake.

"No," said he finally, though it was with a heavy sigh and a wistful look, "you shall promise me nothing—you shall hold yourself free as air. I sha'n't be anywhere near to trouble you; but you will know that nothing shall daunt, or depress, or dishearten me; and no power on earth shall send me back to the old, bad life. I am your humble servant, your rescued castaway—that's all."

"Am I to be nothing to you?" said she timidly.

"My queen and my patron saint; my friend—for a year at any rate," said he. "And then—and then, if what I am thinking of succeeds, I shall ask you to see me once—if you haven't forgotten all about me—and, if you can and will, to give me a hope to work for—but no promise?"

"But, if I choose to promise?"

"No," said he, almost with sternness. "I know I'm too awfully selfish and presumptuous even in saying so much, but I tried to die out of your way, Nina; and, as that dear old chap down stairs wouldn't let me, the only other thing I can do is to rise to a better life, by God's help, for your sake—and *I will!*"

"The half hour," said the doctor, entering, "has unfeelingly run out, and Bertie is getting fractious. I shall be down stairs."

"When shall I come and see you again?" asked she.

"That," said Tyrawley, with a sigh, "I suppose



you had better arrange with Mac. He'll know what is right. But"—with excessive meekness—"you'll let a fellow see you once more, at any rate, before that year of probation?"

Then they parted. Theirs was not love of a nature that needs many caresses for its sustenance; the few that occur are almost sacramental, and only mark supreme moments of joy or pain; but there are caresses of look, and tone, and even thought, which mean perhaps more.

MacAdam gave it as his opinion that Nina might come again in about a week. "And after that," he added, with the national prudence which had temporarily deserted him, "you must manage your own affairs. In fact, I think of taking him into the country. I've got a horse or two I want to look after on a farm in the next county, and the change will do him good. The winds get so bitter here in spring."

Nina breathed low and earnest thanks, and went away with Bertie, who opined that she had been blubbering over Tyrawley; but he didn't mind, as he was a jolly fellow, and it would put that beast John in no end of a wax if he knew it. "And you understand, Nin, I'm not going to tell any body," the young gentleman concluded sagely.

## CHAPTER XIV

### "I INTEND TO DISAPPEAR"

"THAT's the third time I've been up in three hours," said the doctor gleefully, as he entered Miss MacAdam's prim drawing-room, guiltless of æsthetic vanities, "and I'm blessed if he hasn't been as fast asleep as a baby all the while. Love beats sleeping-draughts, and no mistake. Keir's agreeable shock was an inspiration. Hallo! there's his bell. I must overhaul him now he's awake, in case of reaction."

But there was no reaction, and the doctor's abrupt question, "Now, which of Bess's invalid fallals will you have as a pick-me-up?" elicited a modest, "I don't want any invalid fallals, thank you. I should like a chop, if you don't mind."

"Oh, Strephon, Strephon! what an anticlimax. Perhaps you could eat two?"

"I'll try," said the other composedly. "I mean to get well, MacAdam, and not lie here like a wet blanket; and oh! I want to tell you my plans." His cheek flushed, his eye lightened.

"Steady, steady, old man! I don't want to

hear a word till that chop has gone down. Shut up, or you won't be able to digest it."

Tyrawley meekly obeyed, discussed his chops with appetite, and resigned himself afterward to the doctor's orders of another rest.

"In fact," said the latter, "you had better not talk any more to-night. We'll have a long jaw to-morrow, if you like, but that pulse is a bit rackety still. Lie quiet, and let Bess come and read you a stupid novel."

Next day the improvement in Tyrawley was more marked than ever; and after MacAdam had, in the morning, thoroughly snubbed him, and made him consume a mighty square meal, that good physician, in the afternoon, resignedly drew a chair to the bedside, and said:

"Now, old man, for this scheme of yours. I expect it's too romantic to stand my rough handling."

"It's very far from being romantic," said Tyrawley, looking straight in his face, "though it sounds rather peculiar at first. I intend to disappear for a year."

"Bless us and save us! What does this lunatic mean?"

"I'm perfectly sober, and rather sad. I want to disappear for a year from the knowledge of all mankind; to go right down under the surface of society, by my own free will, instead of being kicked there; and"—he added, his face kindling with a sterner light than those graceful and easy

features had ever worn before—"to rise again by my own efforts. But I must have a start, I'm afraid."

"Old Grenfell——" began MacAdam.

"No," said the other, with a smile and a frown. "And no more recommendations, to get my only friend in trouble; but you see, old man, when I started to perform that piece of cowardice on the rocks, I got rid of all my worldly possessions except those clothes on the chair! So"—He stopped. The words seemed to stick in his throat, but he forced them out—"I want to know if you'll put the finishing-touch to all your kindness; and, sink or swim, I'll never trouble you again, except to report myself and thank you in a year from the day I say 'good-by.'"

"Well, what's the damage?" said MacAdam.

"Will you lend me three pounds for six months? If I don't pay it then, you'll never see me again."

"No, I will not," said the doctor violently. "I won't be a party to any cracked-brain scheme that I'm to be kept in the dark about. Nice chap you are to go under the surface; and expect to come up like a jack-in-the-box, with a chest like yours, and just out of a dangerous illness!"

"But listen," pleaded Tyrawley, who looked considerably diminished. "Upon my honor! I've thought it all out in the most practical——"

"Practical fiddlestick! Oh, I see through."

you! Starvation board and lodging, while you're seeking some twopenny-ha'penny clerkship, in some hole where they're not particular as to character, at boy's wages. Stew yourself up in some back office, full of carbonic acid gas, for twelve hours a day !”

Tyrawley shook his head. “No,” said he. “I should want some recommendation even for that. I know the sort of thing, for I had an acquaintance who tried it, in a spasm of disgust at the other thing. You answer an advertisement, you find a hundred lads fresh from school, and two dozen ne'er-do-weels like yourself, in various stages of seediness, looking daggers at each other. Say I'm early in the field, and my coat has not begun to turn green, I get the favor of an interview with the manager, who looks me over, and more or less civilly puts the inevitable question of, ‘Then, may I ask how a man of your appearance and education offers to do a boy's work at boy's wages?’ If I say ‘Because I can't get any other,’ he h'm's and ha's, and enquires for my character, and when I reply with ‘Unluckily, I haven't got one, but——’ he dismisses me with a pitying shake of the head or a ‘just-what-I-expected’ sort of laugh. I know,” he concluded, with plaintive simplicity, “that my appearance is against me, for that sort of thing. Somehow I can't look business-like; though I can't tell where the failure lies.”

MacAdam gave a short, scornful laugh. “No,

my dear fellow; it's all out of your line, clerking is."

"But wait," said the other eagerly. "I give you my word that I'm not going in for that sort of thing at all. Quite the opposite."

"Oh, the opposite!" said Dr. MacAdam, still sarcastic. "Navvying, perhaps. A pick-axe would look well in this mighty grasp." And he took up slightly a white and wasted member which lay on the coverlet.

"Don't!" said the other ruefully. "You make a beggar feel so small. You said I should get my biceps back again. Besides, it isn't navvying; it's something where manners and inches count, and you always say," insinuatingly, "that I'm a civil customer."

"Oh, yes! you've a smooth, carneying tongue, and a way of making eyes, when you choose, that would wheedle the bit out of a horse's mouth; but——"

"Thanks, old man," said Tyrawley, who, far from being insulted, seemed inspirited by this remark. "Then," he added, offering the best illustration in his power of its truth, by fixing his eyes imploringly on the doctor's, "will you lend me that three pound? It's quite true that I want it to live on till I can turn round; and for one other thing."

"I hate mysteries," said MacAdam peevishly. "And I'm sure this Utopian idea of yours is some bosh. You'd tell me about it fast enough,

if it wasn't. I know you. No, I sha'n't lend it you."

Tyrawley reflected, sighed, pulled his mustache, looked at MacAdam to detect any sign of yielding, and proposed a compromise. "If you know what the show is in a month from the time I start, will that do?"

"No," snorted the doctor, "it won't. I sha'n't give my consent to a new form of suicide, any more than I did to the old one."

"Very well," said Tyrawley, "then I won't ask you any more. God knows, you've done more than a brother would do, already. I'll stick to my plan, even if I sweep a crossing and sleep in a doorway for a start."

The doctor flung himself back in his chair, plucked his purse out of his pocket, extracted three sovereigns, and dropped them on the coverlet.

"There, you pig-headed ass; have your way, and much good may it do you. Nice start you'll make on three pounds! But mind, that interview after a month is a part of the bargain, if only for a medical inspection, and you'll have to pass the doctor before I let you out."

Tyrawley wrung his hand, in spite of his resistance, fingered the sovereigns with more affection than he had ever displayed toward ten times that amount, come by chance or chicanery, and whispered,—because the struggle had been rather a hard one under present conditions, and perhaps



because he did not in his secret heart feel sure of success,—“Thank you, old man. I’ll thank you better some day.”

“All right,” said the doctor, rubbing his nose irritably. “I suppose now I’ve got to build you up, so that you don’t get run down when this mighty project is in the *a, b, c* stage? But I know how it ’ll end; not with a doctor, but an undertaker; or, at the best, that precious infirm-ary of yours.”

“No,” said Tyrawley doggedly. “If it comes to that, I can creep into a ditch or a wood like any other hunted animal, and make a decent end there; but I’m going to live and work, old chap,” he added, recovering his spirits, “so that you and she mayn’t be ashamed of me, after all.”

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FIRST PLUNGE

HOPE is a great medicine, and from that hour Mr. Tyrawley's recovery was rapid. He was soon up, dressed, occupying the invalid arm-chair by the drawing-room fire, and had just begun to creep out on the sunny side of the street, looking large-eyed and haggard, but cheerful, when one day a note was brought him, which made the color rush to his cheek and his hand tremble.

“MY DEAREST FRIEND [It was not a very lover-like beginning, but it was characteristic]: We are going abroad the day after to-morrow. Mother has heard—I think my cousin must have found it out—that I came to see you at Dr. MacAdam's, and, of course, when she asked me about it, I told her the truth. She is very much vexed, and I am sorry to vex her, for she has always been kind, though of course she cannot understand as my own mother would have done. She thinks if she takes me away I shall forget you; but I never shall, nor have a word said against you. In a year, I hope, we shall meet again, and have a long, long talk. Meanwhile, perhaps, I shall hear from Dr. MacAdam how you are get-

ting on, as mother says we must not write to one another; but that will not make any difference in our remembrance, will it? I have persuaded mother to let me see you for five minutes in the Octagon Gardens to-morrow, at three o'clock, to say 'good-by.' It will not be a nice 'good-by'; for there is always such a crowd when the band plays; but it will be better than nothing.

"First, however, ask Dr. MacAdam if he is sure it is quite, quite safe for you to come out, and send back word 'yes' or 'no' by old nurse, who brings this. If it is 'no,' write me one letter to say 'good-by' for the present,—mother says I may receive it,—and believe me,

"Always yours,

"NINA."

Of course "yes" was the reply, and anxious were the looks cast by those two unprosperous lovers at the evening sky; but fortune smiled, and the sun was bright when Tyrawley started (naturally too soon) for his limited interview.

"I shall be somewhere on the ground," said the doctor, "with smelling salts and a stretcher. You're still a trifle shaky for rapturous adieus."

It was, indeed, a brief and poor farewell to give him heart for twelve months such as lay before him, but a heart that has known starvation can live on very little; and as to Nina, she was sustained by that unreasoning faith in the future which belongs to extreme youth.

They stood in the quietest corner they could find, looking into one another's faces; two big tears stood on Nina's eyelashes, and there was a quiver of the muscles round Tyrawley's mouth, not altogether attributable to physical weakness.

The gay crowd, in winter furs and velvets, drifted past them like a dream. The band of the Lancers, discoursing elaborate music, might have been the wind in the trees for aught they cared.

"A year is such a long time," said she, in a voice like the moan of a wounded dove.

"Yes," said he; "but think what it will be to meet, after all; and I shall be working and learning to love you better—I suppose that's possible, though I can't at present see how it can be; and, whatever I am, it shall be something honest and honorable—that you, anyhow, won't be ashamed of. I'll keep my queen's white rose unstained, and her colors out of the mire."

"And I shall be always asking God to help you. You'll go to church, won't you?"

"I will," said he emphatically; "and though perhaps you would be rather shocked, or inclined to laugh, if you knew what your knight was going to do, you would understand, if nobody else does, that it is an awful lot better than my wretched past."

"Yes, I am sure it will be good; but is it any thing *very* hard?"

"Nin, mother says the five minutes are up,"

remarked Bertie, with reluctance. "I said I didn't know where you were, but she pointed you out, so I had to come. But I shouldn't mind her, if I were you. She can't do more than scold, so you might as well have a minute or two more spooning. Don't mind me," and he stuck his hands in his pockets, and elaborately turned his back.

"I must not set your mother more against me, however," said Tyrawley reluctantly.

He held out his hand, took hers, stooped his head over it for a single instant, with a whispered "God bless you!" which her faltering lips could scarcely echo. Then they walked back silently, side by side, to Mrs. St. Just, who looked particularly fat and flurried, and by no means happy in the character of a stern parent, especially when her feminine eyes noticed the very distinct signs of recent illness in Tyrawley, as he removed his hat in farewell.

"Goodness' sake! Don't stop about here," she said, half irritably, half compassionately. "Go home, and get to bed, there's a good man, and forget all this—this nonsense."

He smiled faintly, cast a long, expressive look at Nina, and left the gardens.

MacAdam was hovering outside, and pounced upon him. For once, however, he abstained from chaff, and merely said :

"Come along, old man ; you don't look particularly grand. Come and have a cup of Bess's

tea, and lie down, and consider your mad plans at leisure."

Tyrawley thanked him mournfully, but had not a word to say just then; for thirty-four knows more of the painfulness of life than eighteen.

It was a raw, bleak morning. A chill, heavy fog hung over Claretown; sea and sky were leaden gray. A small and shabby bag, containing all Mr. Tyrawley's earthly possessions, stood ready in MacAdam's hall, and the owner sat facing his host, for the last time, at a well-laden breakfast table, to which a certain sickness of heart, of which he was half ashamed, had prevented his doing any justice whatever. Miss MacAdam had departed, rather tearful, to see to the packing of a small luncheon-basket, and even the little doctor was sober and taciturn at the prospect of turning the wild hawk his kindness had tamed into the social desert once more. Tyrawley tried to pull himself together, breaking the silence with a laugh which thinly disguised a sigh.

"I feel," he said, "precisely like a small child going to school for the first time. I've got awfully soft. No matter; a few kicks and cold-shoulders will soon bring me into hard condition again."

"Funking?" said the doctor. "Mighty enterprise doesn't look so brilliant on a nearer view? Say the word, like a sensible chap, and I'll unpack that bag."

"I am a sensible chap, I hope, though I have



been a mixture of knave and fool ; but I don't funk, and that bag and I are going to sow ourselves as the seed of a glorious crop."

"You're a maniac," said the doctor. "But I know it's no good talking."

"Only in one way."

"What's that?"

"It shows me," said Tyrawley, coming over and standing by him, "more and more, how awfully kind and good you are to a poor beggar who has absolutely no claim on you, except that every-body else is down on him."

"Oh, dry up that !" said MacAdam. "Better do as I tell you than sentimentalize."

Tyrawley looked rather hurt, but veiled it with a laugh. "Fancy my being accused of sentiment ; every-body would tell you it was to get something out of you."

"Stow that also," said MacAdam. "I know a fool when I see one."

"Please don't abuse me the last morning," entreated the other meekly. "I'm taking away my sentiment and my folly to a more bracing atmosphere. You'll come and see me off, won't you, old chap?"

"Yes," said the doctor decidedly. "'The unhappy criminal was attended to the scaffold by——'"

"I say, don't !" cried the other superstitiously. "In a month, I hope, I shall write and tell you every thing."



“That’s a bargain ; and if that chest of yours gives you any trouble, you’ll send for your physician, remember.”

Then Miss MacAdam appeared, with provisions, and much anxious counsel as to flannels and steadiness. Tyrawley kissed her hand with moist eyes, and promised to remember everything; then he was driven to the station by MacAdam, and got into a third-class carriage, while the other stood at the door. The bell rang, there was a last grip of the hand—two hands so unlike; a rather husky “Good-by—God bless you!” was exchanged; the doctor turned away, muttering “Confounded idiot!” to hide his emotion from himself, and Mr. Tyrawley was borne off to make his new start alone.

The fog had settled down into its proper London orange when he got out at London Bridge station, and made his way along the greasy roads to that thickly populated and malodorous district which is known as the Township. He paused at the corner of High Street, drew a long breath, took a long look round, and finally, crossing the road, plunged into a labyrinth of dingy streets, rich in the commonest of common lodging-houses. These retreats not being very obvious to the unused eye, he paused at a corner and addressed himself to a female native, who, caparisoned with the usual baby, with a small shawl as head-gear, stood there, airing herself. Perhaps she was

waiting for somebody inside the low-browed public-house, where the gas was just beginning to flicker through the red curtains.

"Can you tell me," said Mr. Tyrawley, raising his hat with his usual politeness, "where there is a common lodging-house? I want to get a night's lodging cheap!"

She looked him all over with a long stare, first of amazement, then of suspicion, and simply replied, in the native vocabulary, "Gar'on!"

Divining this as an expression of incredulity, he added, "I should really be awfully obliged, for I'm a stranger here."

She took another look. "Are you sure you ain't chaffing?"

"Is there any chaff in wanting a night's lodging?"

"Toffs like you," said she, "don't want lodgings in Rose and Key Street, unless——" Here her eye fell eloquently on the bag.

"Nothing wrong there, I assure you, and I'm not a toff, and really, my dear lady, you'd do me no end of a favor if you could suggest a tolerably clean place."

"What can yer go?"

"Threepence."

She began to take a womanly interest in him. Gentlemanly strangers, who lift their hats and address strangers at street corners as "my dear lady," not in derision, are uncommon in Rose and Key Street.

"You take my tip," said she; "you go the other brown, and cross the High Street to St. Cuthbert's Chambers. I've heard of toffs under a cloud *there*; but in the kens just round here"—and she entered into sundry entomological and other particulars too painful to transcribe.

He thanked her with becoming sincerity and went away; while, rough but womanly, she shouted after him, "Wish you luck!" at which he turned and lifted his hat again.

He found a big corner building with "St. Cuthbert's Chambers" cut in a tablet over the door, mounted the flight of stone steps, stated his object rather shamefacedly at the window of the little entrance-lodge, where he was encountered by the "Deputy" (the generic title of the gentleman who admits and declines admission). He was past surprises, and briefly replied, "Fourpence," and, on receiving that sum, presented Tyrawley with a bone ticket and the gratuitous advice that he had better be there early if he wanted to pick his bed.

"Could I," said the latter, looking rather wildly round him, "leave my bag in the kitchen or anywhere?"

The deputy laughed compassionately. "Bless you, it would be sold by auction before your back had been turned half a minute. But I can put it in one of the lockers, if you like; and if it's all square. We don't want more 'coppers' than we can help coming about the Chambers."

"Perfectly square, I give you my word. I'm much obliged to you."

The man took the bag with a gruff "All right, sir," and turning to his wife, who sat within, in front of the narrow shelves occupied by plates of sliced brawn, German sausage, and other delicacies, communicated the fact that they had another swell down on his luck.

At this moment Tyrawley returned. "Is there," he enquired, "such a thing as getting some supper here by and by?"

"You can get it cold from me, or you can bring your own grub and cook it at the kitchen fire, if the pans ain't all in use. Crockery provided, and all conveniences if you want a wash."

"And all," said Tyrawley, "for fourpence? By Jove! it *is* cheap!"

"So," said the deputy, looking at him impressively, "is the company; and sometimes nasty."

"Beggars," replied he, "cannot be choosers. Thanks. See you again."

"Jolly bird, if he *is* under a cloud," remarked the deputy, as Tyrawley ran down the steps a second time.

After a critical inspection of shops he entered a temple of local fashion, where corduroys flapped in his face, and men's boots of portentous thickness garlanded the doorway, and, lounging against the counter, remarked, in his gentlemanly drawl, "I say, I want a proper coster's jersey."

The proprietor, a little fat man, grinned and stared, but with a brief, "There you are, then," fished out an armful—sailor blue, Salvation Army red, startling stripes of orange and purple—and cast them on the counter; investigating curiously the white taper fingers and thumb which turned them delicately over.

"H'm—these," said Mr. Tyrawley, putting aside the stripes, "are perhaps a little violent; this"—curiously examining a dark-blue one—"would do, I should think. How much?"

"Two-and-eleven, your size. You ain't ever wore one before, I suppose?" he added, with scorn and pity, observing his customer's ignorant handling of the selected woollen strait-waistcoat.

"Never," he replied, putting aside his hat and coat, and eying it doubtfully. "Which is the way in?"

The proprietor indicated it, but observed sarcastically that he had better take off that flash collar and tie, if he wanted to look any thing like.

When Tyrawley had agreed, and writhed himself into his new garment, to the great disarrangement of his satiny locks, a small glass was, with a slight chuckle, handed to him, in which he gravely studied himself a moment, then laid it down, with a calmly convinced, "I do look an awful ruffian! Humiliating discovery, how the absence of two inches of starched linen levels things!"

However, he paid for the jersey, which he

kept on, and gratefully acceding to the man's offer to make a parcel of his other belongings, sallied forth again, bending his steps this time to a certain public-house known as the Apple Tree, and much frequented by costers.

## CHAPTER XVI

### MR. TYRAWLEY'S MENTOR

PUBLIC-HOUSES, of a kind, were no unknown ground to Mr. Tyrawley, though neither the drink nor the society there had ever attracted him, except as means to an end. But this was a house of a different character; no bejewelled barmaid, but a stout landlady, with a swelled face, suggesting an unregenerate Mrs. Higson, presided, and enquired, not without suspicion, in spite of the jersey, "What's for you?"

"A lemonade, please," said the insinuating Tyrawley, and showing her a leaf torn out of his pocket-book, inscribed "Jim Naylor, enquire at the Apple Tree." "Can you tell me where I am likely to drop on this gentleman?" She read it, and her suspicions deepened.

"What can the likes of you want with the Little 'un?" said she. "He ain't been up to any thing this long while. I tell you straight and plain, my master don't want no detectives coming round the house, which the police has never had nothing against."

"I assure you," said he plaintively, "I'm not a detective; but I have had a very close acquaint-



ance with Jim Naylor in times past, and he told me to look him up here."

"Oh! that's different," said she, mollified. "I dare say he'll be round presently. He comes here most days this time, now he's got a pitch in the High. You can wait if you've a mind to; though I don't know what a gentleman like you can have to do with the Little 'un."

"Does this look like a swell?" asked he, with a laugh, smiting his breast.

"Oh, get along!" said she; "togs ain't men. I ain't been in the public line all my blessed days, not to know a West End toff when I see one!"

"Is Jim doing well?" enquired Tyrawley.

There was a shade of anxiety in his tone which puzzled the landlady.

"Uncommon, I hear. But there, Jim always does, when he don't get conjuring about with rough company. Here he is. Here's somebody wants you!"

Here Mr. Jim Naylor was, arrayed in a waist-coat of true coster cut, with about five hundred iridescent pearl buttons; trousers, profuse over the instep and tight at the knee, and a scarlet comforter. He was only an inch or two shorter than Tyrawley himself, but of heavier build, running a good deal to flesh, round-shouldered, in-kneed, with a large ocean of hairless red face, sparsely islanded by two small, fierce, light-blue eyes, the fragment of a nose, and a wide mouth,

revealing two rows of teeth, white and pointed as a young dog's; the whole surmounted by a thatch of tiny close curls, yellow as corn.

At the landlady's address he stopped short, and turned on Tyrawley that warning scowl, equivalent to the visible stiffening of your dog's body when introduced to strangers of his own sex, which is considered the thing by the British rough.

It changed, however, with absurd rapidity, into a broad grin of the warmest welcome as he exclaimed, in a voice husky from professional shouting, "Well, this beats all! Blowed if it ain't my gentleman guv'nor, my aristocratic tip-topper, come to look up Jim Naylor, according to promise." And he extended a great leg-of-mutton fist, which Tyrawley accepted with the satisfaction of a man who has not invariably been made welcome.

"Now," continued Mr. Naylor, before the other could speak, "the next question is, my noble colonel, what's the name you'll put to it? I don't care if it's fizz at ten shillings a bottle." And he slapped his pocket, which resounded agreeably.

"I'm really awfully glad to see you, old chap, and uncommonly obliged," said Tyrawley gently. "But I don't drink, and I've just had a lemonade. What I do want——"

"Say the word," interpolated the ardent Naylor. "If it was hot-house pines, and they

could be got in the Township Market, you should have 'em."

"Thanks, awfully. No, it's only a walk and a little advice that I want."

Disappointment and gratification struggled in Mr. Naylor's breast. "Hear him," he said, half proudly, half pathetically. "Wants advice from *me*! Comes to the Apple Tree in the Township for nothing but that, and a dry walk with Jim Naylor. Blessed if he ain't got a jersey on, to look like my mate; not as he does, though—oh, no, no!" wagging his head eloquently. "Well, come along, sir. Anywhere in particular?"

"Anywhere where we can have a quiet jaw," said Tyrawley, taking him by the arm as they left the Apple Tree; at which Jim swelled and strutted with pride, and insisted on carrying Tyrawley's parcel as they walked down the quietest street available.

The subject of their conversation, which seemed engrossing, will be dealt with later on. Its fragments were enigmatical.

"714's is the thing, though in some districts 420's. 'Ware specks. Best stand in the S. E. Pay a bob or two more for a bit o' brass and paint. Them smiling ways o' yours—ay, and that there bundle o' white fives, that can hold its own against my big reddishes. Get on like a house afire, you will. Coach you? Won't I! Back you through fire and water, that I will; and through sickness and health, and here-unto,"

said Mr. Naylor,—who had assisted at numerous coster weddings,—with an indistinct reminiscence of the marriage service, “I plight yer my truth.” And he slapped his hand into Tyrawley’s with a smack that echoed down the street. “And now,” said he, “you won’t have some lush; it must be grub instead. The only point, *what* grub?”

Mr. Tyrawley modestly suggested that he had seen in an eating-house window beefsteak-puddings for threepence; but Mr. Naylor waived the suggestion aside with a derisive :

“Bally cow-beef for thruppence! Not you! No, Jim and his guv’nor ain’t going to do the thing so shabby as that. Tiptop restoront it is, in the High, or nothing.”

Tyrawley submitted. After a plentiful meal a further conversation followed; an appointment was made for the next morning, and, finally, Mr. Naylor escorted his “gentleman guv’nor,” as he insisted on calling him, to St. Cuthbert’s Chambers, where, after looking round the kitchen, and deploring its unsuitability to that illustrious stranger, he bade him good-night, with a cheery and emphatic :

“Take yer all round, and show yer every blessed dodge I know myself; blowed if I won’t, to-morrer.”

On the first night in a common lodging-house, however decently conducted, the fancy can hardly dwell agreeably. This side of hardship

was new to Tyrawley, and touched his idiosyncrasy where it was not callous; he was very nearly making a bolt for the street, and he put away from him, as sacrilege in such surroundings, all thought of Nina.

He was one of the first inmates down and out; and, mindful of a promise of Jim's to introduce him to a "widder" woman, a friend of Jim's missis, who would let him have a decent little crib for three shillings a week, he turned his back on St. Cuthbert's Chambers, devoutly thankful at the prospect of re-entering them no more.

A windy spring day. Heaped-up masses of dark-gray cloud, with pale, yellow gleams between, looked down on a broadish street—steep, busy, muddy with the tramp of thousands of feet; showing a glimpse of a yet busier thoroughfare at the top, and a glimmer of steel-gray river at the bottom. Up and down near the doors of some big sale-rooms were rows of vehicles, from the shabbiest coster's barrow to the smartest of painted and gilt-lettered vans. Within was collected a motley crowd, no less various, of men and lads—ragged jackets and striped jerseys elbowing Melton great-coats and smart morning suits with republican impartiality, amid great wooden cases and barrels. A strange aromatic odor, almost stifling to the uninitiated, mingled with corduroys, tobacco, and that peculiar, subtle smell of man, only absent where a

tub is a diurnal necessity. At the lower end of the room, this gale of Araby the unblest was distinctly present; so were rough, even ragged, coats; so also a tendency to extremes of color in mufflers, and an exuberance in buttons; and among their possessors stood that ill-matched yet friendly pair, Jim Naylor and his "gentleman guv'nor" as he persisted in calling him.

Mr. Tyrawley looked rather bewildered and a little pale, possibly because the breezes of St. Cuthbert's Chambers and River Street are scarcely so bracing as Claretown; but he was amiable and polite as ever, and his mild and grave jocularities at once awed and tickled his rougher neighbors; whose humor, more rudimentary and personal, he received with perfect calmness, while his height and breadth of shoulders tended to keep it within limits.

"Now, guv'nor," said Jim, as the auctioneer mounted his rostrum, "here's the lot you've got to be in with;" and he presented him to three or four individuals rather less prosperous looking than their brethren. "That is, till you can do without it."

Mr. Tyrawley nodded agreeably to the foremost and remarked that it was awfully windy, which the other received with a stare, and a sulky, "Oh, blow the wind!" not because he was out of temper, but because a hand-to-mouth struggle for existence is apt to efface small courtesies.

Then arose the steady hubbub of rapid and business-like putting up and knocking down, which is as unlike as possible to the verbal embroidery of a West End auction-room. Here, time is money, every-body has much the same chance, and the few jokes going are strictly professional or personal. All possessed, however, so keen an interest for Tyrawley, and he showed so ready a grasp of the situation, that his mentor was quite unable, when all was satisfactorily over, to resist giving him a violent blow of approval, coupled with the remark:

"Why, you takes to it like a duck to water ! Never see such a thing. I thought you'd be as awkward as a young moke, that I did."

"My dear Jim, I'm delighted you're gratified, but I'm afraid it's all bunkum," said Mr. Tyrawley, looking vaguely to the four points of the compass. "Shall we get the things home?"

Mr. Naylor laughed benevolently. "You come along o' me," he said. "You can manage a bit o' lifting, I suppose?"

"In this blessed garment," said Mr. Tyrawley, stretching out a pair of long, indigo arms, "I feel I can lift tons!"

"All right," said the exultant Naylor; then, calling a seedy youth in charge of a pair of Russian ponies to his side, "Here, minder, will your guv'nor stop much longer in the Fox, d'ye think?"

It was early evening when the two got out at



Plebham Station. It is not a plate-glass and gilt station; its refreshment-room is sordid, its book-stall offers only the cheapest literature, and Plebham itself is neither aristocratic nor picturesque, but, in the main, a good, honest, working-class neighborhood; where fortunes are not to be made in big coups, but are possible to plodders. Tyrawley looked with affection and interest he had never felt for West End and watering-place mansions, at the bustling shops of the main roads, the mean side-streets, and the efforts at villas and terraces where dwell the higher ten of Plebham. He looked as the general looks at a map of the seat of war; and his possible rewards were things even more impalpable than a bit of bronze metal or a few capitals after a name—a fleeting smile, the touch of a hand, a glance of tender understanding of the stress of the fight. But his pensive, inward look was mistaken by the worthy Naylor for depression.

“Buck up a bit, guv’nor,” said he. “I know Plebham ain’t much of a place, after what you’ve been used to, but there’s money to be made if you knows how to go about it.”

“Oh, I’m all right. Jolly tired,” said Tyrawley, stretching his arms over his head, with a laugh. “But I say advisedly ‘jolly.’ I’m in awful spirits.”

“Tired?” repeated Mr. Naylor; “and so you will be if you are goin’ to play the same game you was up to to-day, doin’ them other blokes’ work

as well as your own, and only get laughed at for your pains. They giv' you a name," he added, with a broader grin, "in consequence of what you did along o' them specks in your lot."

"Well, what is it?" said Tyrawley. Coster's chaff, he felt, would cut much less than Paget's virtuous rebuke, or the contempt of society for its outcast members.

" 'The Honest Man,' " replied Jim dryly, for excessive honesty is regarded with mingled feelings by his class. "Like it?" he added, curiously regarding the change in the other's countenance.

"Of course I do. I consider it to be what that gentleman in the sky-blue and orange jersey characterizes as a 'bang-up' title."

"Oh! you'll get on first-rate with the boys, if you ain't too soft and easy with 'em."

"My dear fellow," said the other, "I assure you I'm not half so soft and easy as I appear."

"No," replied Jim, with a meaning glance, "I found that out pretty early. Them hands of yours ain't as lady-like as they look, if a bloke chances to run agin them. Well, now, I'll take you to that there widder's house as I told you of. Unless," persuasively, "you'll wet the bargain?"

"On no account," replied Tyrawley gayly, as he drew the wistful Naylor past certain hospitable swing-doors.

The cleanliness of the widow woman's house

was a matter of opinion; the room, a tiny attic, at whose highest point only Tyrawley could stand upright; the bed, full six inches too short for him, and mysteriously knobby. He ached in every limb from the ardor with which he had carried heavy cases of merchandise, he had knocked pieces of skin off his hands against stray splinters and nails, and he was beyond expression tired; but no Sybarite on his couch of down ever rested so sweetly, or woke so cheerfully, as he amid the fog which hangs more or less perennially over Plebham.

## CHAPTER XVII

### "THE COVE TO SOAP 'EM DOWN"

"HERE'S a thing," said Dr. MacAdam—"two unfortunate lovers expecting me to act as a *Deus ex machina*." He was sitting at dessert with his sister, and tossed a letter, which had arrived by the last post, across the table to her :

"DEAR DR. MACADAM :

"Will you please give or send the enclosed photograph to Mr. Tyrawley, as I think he has a right to it, though mother doesn't like my sending it? Will you kindly write and tell me if he is well and happy? My kindest regards to your sister and yourself, and my love to him.

"Yours gratefully,

"N. ST. JUST."

On the back of the photograph was written, with more than Nina's usual firmness, "Yours ever, Nina."

"Poor things!" said Miss MacAdam, shaking her head. "How *can* such an affair end?"

"That young lady," said MacAdam, "mayn't have much go in her, but she has an amount of stay which makes me think something *may* come

of it, after all. But how can I send her lunatic this treasure, when there isn't even a bubble on the surface to show where he has gone down?" And he scratched his head perplexedly.

But the first post next morning solved the difficulty. The little doctor came in jocund, with a letter in his hand.

"Listen," said he, and read it aloud, chuckling :

"DEAREST MACADAM :

"The enterprise is prospering, thank God and you—and somebody else, whom I hardly dare to think of ; and yet, but for that thought, I don't suppose it would have prospered at all. Now, I want you, if you don't mind, to come and see it all for yourself, and tell me whether I am a greater or less fool than you give me credit for being. I am well, and oceans happier, and, I think, more of a man than Poyntz's adversary at billiards, or even the professor's hack ; but you shall judge, only you must prepare yourself to be flabbergasted out of all conventional ideas of 'the thing'; otherwise you might, on the impulse of the moment, turn your back forever on your affectionate and grateful,

"I. T.

" (*alias* 'Gentleman Lee,' or—wonders will never cease—' *The Honest Man* !')

"P. S.—The idea of seeing you has scattered my few brains. Will you meet me to-morrow,



between twelve and one, at the corner of High Street and Gregory Street, Plebham, S. W.? Trains every ten minutes from London Bridge. Do come!”

“What on earth does a man like Tyrawley find to do here?” said the doctor, as he emerged from under the railway-arch into Plebham High Street, which even the illusory sweetness of the spring sunshine failed to poetize: “‘Our Men’s Boots at 4s. 11d.!’ ‘Apples, a penny a pound!’ Three fried-fish shops, and butchers glorying in New Zealand meat! What does it all mean?”

The butcher caught his eye, and, mistaking its import, offered him, with the cheerful civility of Plebham, “Prime cuts at 6½d.”

MacAdam sadly shook his head, and, enquiring his way to Gregory Street, was informed that he would know it by the Fox and Grapes at one corner, and a ham-and-beef shop at the other.

“Gracious Heavens!” muttered the doctor, transposing nouns in his bewilderment, “Fox and ham and beef and grapes! Has my lunatic become a potman?”

He trotted on, his smart morning get-up—for the doctor was a dandy in his own style—rather admired by the fair sex of Plebham, out doing its shopping, with useful baskets or shiny black bags grasped by hands whose index finger was inserted in a doorkey, or which propelled basinettes,

which served the double purpose of baby- and luggage-cart.

He reached the corner. A group of costermongers stood round a barrow, tastefully arranged with oranges and nuts, vouched by placards to be the "Finest in Plebham." Trade was slack at the moment; but, as he looked, an excellent female, with a brow furrowed by household cares, was dragged by a rebellious urchin up to the tempting fruit, and one of the group detached himself to serve. His back was toward MacAdam, but there was something uncosterlike and strangely familiar in the unusual height and powerful grace of the figure; and when he touched the child's cheek with his finger as he took the mother's penny, MacAdam recognized anatomically the peculiar slenderness and flexibility of the hand; though it was by no means as white as that which used to handle a cue with such fatal dexterity.

"By all that's wonderful!" muttered the doctor, "it *is* that mad chap!" He approached Tyrawley, and, tapping him on the shoulder, enquired dryly, to hide his mingled emotions, "What is this masquerade for?" Both his hands were seized and wrung in a grip which denoted considerable improvement in muscle.

"My dear old chap! I'm so awfully glad to see you, I can't say. I was afraid you wouldn't come to these remote regions. Don't look at a fellow so,"—for the doctor was eying him up



and down,—“I’m not masquerading. I wear the costume of my class, and I’m not ashamed of it, nor of my trade. You understand what the enterprise is, now?”

“I do,” said MacAdam emphatically, “and it’s even madder than I thought, though I must own it seems to agree with you—look thinnish, and a bit weather-beaten, but in hard condition.”

“I haven’t felt so well for years; but don’t let’s stand jawing here. Perhaps, though, it may amuse you to see me as the British coster for half an hour or so; after that trade will be slack for a bit, and I’ll take a holiday. I’ve engaged one of my brethren to look after the barrow for me. I told him a patron of mine, a benevolent physician, was coming to look me up. He asked if you were a ‘medical mission,’ and I replied ‘Extremely so.’ I’ll tell you all about him presently; he’s a fine fellow, and has done me a lot of good turns. Meanwhile I’ll introduce you to him. Here, Jim,” he added, “this is Dr. MacAdam, who saved my life.”

The British coster is no sycophant. Mr. Naylor ducked his head, cast a suspicious glance at the doctor, grinned away the suspicion, and extended a big, red, grimy fist, with the remark:

“And you done a good job when you done that, mister.”

“So I think,” said MacAdam. “Might I ask if you are our friend’s mentor?”

“Dunno about mentor—blow that! But I

taught him all he knows in the fruit line, if you mean that."

"Did he take to it quickly?"

"I believe you—like a fish to water. He's got," said Mr. Naylor, regarding his *protégé* with benevolent criticism, "some finniking ways as I don't hold with, and some odd pranks about fair dealing which ain't business; but I must admit as he makes 'em answer. It's quite surprisin'," added Mr. Naylor, waxing eloquent under the doctor's amused approval, "the trade he does, when other blokes is standing with their hands in their pockets. Females especially he does get round, talking to them, like the toff he is, till they makes believe to be ladies, just for company."

The doctor shook his head at Tyrawley, who blushed and protested eagerly that it was only common politeness.

"Ain't common at a barrer, though," rejoined Mr. Naylor. "And there's one thing," he added, observing Tyrawley's uneasiness, "he's alike with old 'uns and young 'uns. Ain't got such a thing as a 'tart' himself. Won't look at 'em."

Tyrawley was palpably relieved, and laughed. "Thank you, Jim," said he, as Mr. Naylor, remarking that he would be inside the Fox with a pint of four ale when wanted, politely retired. "Now, MacAdam, can I offer you a seat on an orange-box and a taste of my stock—which is as good as you would get in East Street, in Clare-town, for double the money—or would you rather

walk about till I've cleared off my usual morning customers ? ”

The doctor elected rather to stand and smoke, with his back against some railings, and Tyrawley himself sat astride on the orange-box and gratefully accepted a cigar, a luxury to which he had been a stranger for a month. The doctor was intensely amused at the spectacle of the impassive chevalier of Claretown Parade under the new aspect of a street salesman; and his fixed gaze and occasional chuckle rather put his friend out of countenance, especially as most of his customers were of the gentler sex. Now, as in Plebham the masculine half of a sentimental couple may frequently be observed to lean on the arm of his feminine counterpart; so it is also not infrequently a habit for the latter to do the lion's share of the courting, and Mr. Tyrawley was, unfortunately, much better looking and better mannered than the average male of Plebham; where, moreover, what passes for ordinary politeness in Park Lane and Grosvenor Square is apt to be viewed as something personally complimentary.

MacAdam, looking on at a dropping fire of customers,—chiefly shopping matrons, with an occasional small slavey, a knot of school children, and a working-man or two in the dinner hour,—presently saw his friend's eyebrows take an upward curve of protest, and his color heighten, as a damsel, in a large hat decorated with a field of

nodding flowers,—the extremest fashions of the West End last year, caricatured to suit Plebham,—pulled up short, with an affected start, and coquettishly remarked:

“Oh!”—which she pronounced “aow”—“I am ’ot! Don’t I look as if I wanted a horange?”

“I’m not aware,” said he, with a martyred air, “that the need of an orange expresses itself legibly on the human countenance.”

“You do talk a lot of rubbish, Mr. Gentleman Lee, or whatever they call you,” said she, picking one up, and beginning to peel it with a long, dirty nail. “Well, don’t I look as if I wanted a young man?”

Tyrawley shrank from the very pointed ogle which accompanied this query, and replied, with formal politeness, that on that point he was even less a judge.

“Supposing I were to say that I do?” giggled she.

“In that case,” replied he, “I should venture to suggest that your parents have, doubtless, among their circle some one who would fill the void.”

“Well, you are a nice one to answer a girl like that. I suppose you think that *you* wouldn’t do?”

“I’m quite sure of it,” said Tyrawley, in a hurry, casting a piteous side-glance at MacAdam.

She tossed her head with an angry, “Well, that’s plain enough.”

“My dear young lady,” he replied composedly, “that is precisely what I intended it to be.”

“Oh, all serene!” said she, throwing down a ha’penny. “There you are, Mr. Two-a-penny. I’m off to your betters!” And she departed in a huff, to his intense relief.

He went across to MacAdam for comfort, but that worthy gave him chaff, pretending to think that his polite coldness was assumed to blind him, MacAdam, lest he should tell tales.

A discreet mother, purchasing two dozen for a household down with fever; a party of board-school boys, whom the swell coster had somehow fascinated, so that they hung admiringly round the stall, and were extravagant in ha’porths; and an elderly housekeeper, who had seen better days, and at each visit solemnly urged upon him that he was too good for this place, soothed his feelings; and a lull coming in business, and Mr. Naylor emerging from the Fox with the remark that he was full up, and could look after the barrow as soon and as long as his guv’nor liked—that gentleman proposed to MacAdam that they should go and get some dinner somewhere.

The doctor looked unhappy.

“Eh? Dinner at two o’clock? And what? I’ve seen tripe, and, I think, welks, and horse—stated to be ham and beef.”

“In the wilds of Plebham,” replied the other gayly, “two is an upper-ten dinner hour. Ham and beef *is* a correct statement, but probably you

wouldn't like it. But there's a little Italian shop where I go in moments of extravagance, where you can get a decent steak and omelette, and, I'm told, a fair glass of claret; there 'll be nobody there at this hour, and we can have a long jaw."

Shortly afterward they found themselves comfortably accommodated on a red velvet settee in the inner sanctum—half gay, half faded—of one of those small Italian restaurants which few London suburbs lack.

"But now," said the doctor, and speaking quite seriously, "let me ask you three questions. Do you really mean you can stand this sort of thing every day, and all day? Can you make it pay? And does it present a reasonable prospect of leading to something better—better suited to you?"

Tyrawley answered him with equal deliberation. "I stand it perfectly," said he. "Physical discomforts never bothered me much, you know; and, as a rule, it rather amuses me. I do make it pay—as advertisements say, 'by strict honesty and personal attention to business, I. T. hopes to merit, etc.' Something better? Yes. I don't mean to be a coster all my days. I'm already considered a rising man in the fraternity."

"I observed," said the doctor, "the admiring and respectful manner in which your muscular friend addressed you."

"He is really," said Tyrawley, "more my 'guv'nor' than I am his. This is his pitch,

though I hire the barrow at a shilling a week; we go halves in stock and profits; he supplies the greater part of the knowledge and the shouting, at which I’m not good yet, while I, he informs me, am the ‘cove to soap ’em down.’”

“You didn’t soap the damsel in the botanical hat much,” said the doctor grimly.

“She and her kind,” replied the other, with elevated eyebrows, “are one of my few trials. You’ve no idea how hard it is, in the esteemed Naylor’s phrase, to give them the complete ‘choke off.’ They don’t understand sarcasm, and you can’t knock a woman down, whatever her impudence.”

“It’s all very well,” said the doctor, “but I’m sadly afraid that, when my back is turned, you make havoc in the female hearts of Plebham. What would Miss——”

“Don’t!” said the other. “Don’t mention that name in such company.”

He was so serious that the doctor forbore, and invited him instead to give an outline of his adventures since they met. It was not a very exciting narrative, after the first incongruity of the idea wore off; for Tyrawley made light of small disagreeables and discomforts, of hard fare, long hours, and the sundry pains and weaknesses which take some time to wear out after a long illness; of the first vague suspicions his brother merchants entertained of the toff who had settled down so strangely among them, and



of the barrenness of such a life to an educated man.

"Well," said MacAdam, "you have more pig-headedness, and also more pluck, than I gave you credit for; and if only you can stand it morally and physically, you may do something."

"If I could stick it out the first month," said Tyrawley, "I can stick it out altogether."

"What on earth put it in your head, I should like to know?"

"Despair, and Jim Naylor's address in an old pocket-book."

"Ah! by the way, how came you to be hand and glove with that delectable individual?"

"Because we had been fist to fist previously," laughed Tyrawley—"or, rather, knuckles to nose."

"Pray explain."

"It's simple enough. I had been to see a man I knew in Guy's Hospital, and in a back street, somewhere in that region, I came across Master Jim—who is, as you see, nearly as long as your humble servant, and a trifle heavier—'bashing,' as he described it, a much smaller animal of his own species, whom Jim alternately knocked down and kicked up, while an admiring crowd stood round to see fair play. After looking on a minute I ventured to suggest that things were getting monotonous, not to say disgusting. Jim replied by irrelevant personal

remarks. I persisted. He then suggested, as a joke, that perhaps if I wasn't such an adjective, adjective, adjective got-up toff, I might have a round with him myself, but he would lay I had no stomach for fighting.

“The other poor little brute looked so awfully done that it got my blood up ; and, much to Jim's surprise and satisfaction, I took off my coat, hat, and gloves, confided them to the most decent-looking person present, and ‘went for ’ Mr. Naylor. We weren't badly matched, but I was fresh and he was tired, and I have had,” said Mr. Tyrawley, a momentary shade of the past crossing his brow, “to hold my own. So I very soon had him on his back, in which position he grunted, with that manliness which is a trait of his, ‘All right, my gentleman guv'nor. I gives in. I won't lay another finger on little Perkins, for your sake. Blow me if I ever see a prettier touch than that last of yours.’ ”

I thanked him, with my usual politeness, which I had recovered by this time, and offered him liquid refreshment, which he accepted on the condition of my first shaking hands with him. When, after a considerable conversation, we parted, he insisted on writing his address in my pocket-book, and telling me that, if ever I wanted any thing in Jim Naylor's line, from a gooseberry to a cocoanut, I'd only got to name it. You know the rest. I'm sure the poor chap has been a good friend and a good chum to me,

and he would be a fruiterer with a big shop by now, if it wasn't for that fatal beer.

"I do seem to fall on my legs in a most remarkable and wholly undeserved manner, as to other fellows taking me up. Don't I?" he added, laying his hand caressingly on the other's shoulder. "You first, old man, a long way ahead ; and now poor Jim."

"Oh! you're such a soft ass," said the doctor, "one *has* to take you up. But now we've had the solids in the discussion of trade and beef-steak, what do you say to a touch of romance by way of dessert?" And he put his hand slowly into his breast-pocket, with a twinkle in his eye. Tyrawley looked at him with restless eagerness. "Wait a bit," said he, extracting the papers. "Let me see. This is information respecting the next Derby winner—you're not a sporting character. This is a prescription for colic, a disease you're more likely to cause your customers to experience than to suffer from yourself. Oh! this is it: portrait of a lady, fair, fat, and forty—you told me once, you know, that was your special line—presented to me the day before yesterday."

Tyrawley held out his hand; his hope seemed too good to be true, and the doctor yielded the little envelope to him with a sardonic, "Be sure you give it me back."

The other drew out the photo, and, instantly turning his back, was absorbed in its contempla-

tion for some minutes. Then he turned round, with a flushed cheek and look of extravagant rapture, and said gently, “ You heartless villain! This is for me. Why didn’t you give it me at once?”

“ Don’t abuse your superiors. Besides, would you have liked your fellow-coster’s opinion on it?”

“ No, no! of course not. I was only joking. Tell me all about it. Did she really send it? How is she? Did she say any thing about me? Is there——”

“ Oh, dry up there! That’s all I know about it. I’ve no further use for it.”

And the doctor handed over Nina’s letter, with which, and the photo, Mr. Tyrawley plunged into an abyss of unreasoning happiness for the next ten minutes; while the waiter, a romantic Swiss, scented a love affair from afar.

“ When you’ve returned to this sublunary sphere,” said the doctor, “ I have a question to ask. I have to answer that letter. Have you any thing particular for me to say?”

Now, if Mr. Tyrawley had been twenty, he would have replied, “ Tell her——” and added a string of blissful asseveration; but he was thirty-four, and broken in by experience, and he knew that Nina, for all her high spirit, was in her mother’s power. So he looked down and thought, and then said, in a low voice, for he was half moved and half uneasy under MacAdam’s twink-

ling eye, "Say that I am quite well, and as happy as I can be away from her; that I prize what she has sent me unspeakably, and I'll try to deserve it by keeping my promise, and—and"—it rather choked him to say it out—"my humble and faithful love."

Little MacAdam was moved, too. "All right, old man," he said cheerily, "I'll remember every word, and I'll say from myself that it's a correct statement, and that you are the very pink of costers, and a perfect Sir Galahad with regard to the fair sex of Plebham."

"Pray, *pray* don't!" said Tyrawley, in horror. "She wouldn't understand that there's absolutely no real hardship in this life; and the other thing wouldn't occur to her at all. You won't, will you?"

"Very well," said MacAdam. "I'll merely say that you're absorbed in semi-commercial pursuits, and on the high-road to be a merchant prince."

"That reminds me," said Tyrawley, and he produced a small white paper packet, which he placed, with an air of solemn triumph, in MacAdam's hand.

"What's this?" said he, with a stare of surprise as he opened it and found two florins. "Fee—testimonial to my merits?"

"The first instalment of that three pounds you threw at my head two months ago."

"You're a good chap," said MacAdam, with

feeling. “You deserve to get on, and, by Jove! I’m sure you will.”

There was a little more talk, and a promise that when Tyrawley had a photo taken Mac-Adam would send it on; then he tipped the waiter royally,—a proceeding highly appreciated by these mountaineers,—and returned to look at Mr. Naylor, who was shouting conscientiously without moving a muscle of his purple countenance, “Here you are, ladies! Best in Plebham,” etc.

While Tyrawley was engaged with a special customer—a feeble old woman to whom he had done some small favor, and who insisted on stopping to talk of her family troubles—the doctor drew Naylor aside, presented him with one of Mr. Tyrawley’s florins, and requested a candid opinion of the latter’s prospects as a trader.

“Guv’nor,” replied the latter, laying a great knobbly forefinger staggeringly on the doctor’s breast, “he’ll do! You’ll see that there swell pardner of mine in his own shop in the West End yet. Yes, and driving in his own carriage, with a bang-up pair of steppers from his country willa. See if you don’t. And some young lady sitting beside him; but she must be a oner, she must, to be up to my mark for my gentleman guv’nor;” and Mr. Naylor snorted triumphantly.

Then the doctor looked at his watch, and found his train was almost due, and Tyrawley went with him to the station and saw him off,

with many grateful messages to his sister, a promise to write soon and fully, and an entreaty that MacAdam would answer "her" letter at once.

"He's a jolly sort enough, that medical mission is," was Mr. Naylor's comment on the doctor. "But," he added, rather depreciatingly, "he didn't give me a track, nor so much as take me up for swearing; and I could lick him with one hand tied behind me."

From which remark it may be opined that Mr. Naylor had his own standards for the measurement of his fellow-creatures, and objected as much as do more enlightened persons when the latter fall short of them.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE HERO OF A STREET FIGHT

MR. JOHN PAGET, who lived by rule and measure,—an unusual and scarcely endearing trait at twenty-seven,—being concerned about his liver and requiring exercise, and being engaged to a heavy luncheon at the house of some City friends in the plutocratic suburb of Grasswich, elected to get out at the humble Plebham, and walk across for his stomach's sake. As he was proceeding along the High Street, he saw a crowd, and was about, with his usual absence of ordinary human weakness, to skirt it, when its central figure caught his eye and checked his well-regulated steps. Now, a crowd collects for nothing in Plebham; but here there was a remarkable spectacle. It was no less than Mr. Tyrawley, rather muddy as to his garments, dishevelled as to his hair, very pale, hatless, with the blood running down his cheek from a cut on his forehead, and his breath coming in short gasps.

To his left arm clung a very little woman, weeping hysterically and muddier than himself, while his right hand had enough to do in repelling the attacks of an undersized coster of the lowest pattern, just drunk enough to be reckless,

both as to fists and epithets. A black eye and a slightly ensanguined nose, which bore witness to the length and purpose of his antagonist's arm, had not yet cooled his ardor; and, as he varied his amusements by throwing mud and stones from the road, Mr. Tyrawley became tired, and gave his adhesion to the remark of a woman in the crowd that "it was a shame, and should her little boy fetch the copper?" with a breathless, though cool, "Yes, please, I'm getting a trifle warm." He added, in a momentary lull, to the occupier of his left arm: "No, my good woman, I won't hurt him much; but I'm afraid he'll hurt you."

At this juncture, however, a large figure in a sleeved waistcoat, adorned with quite an eruption of pearl buttons, shouldered its way through the crowd, which gave way with extreme politeness, shot out a ponderous arm, and, without more ado than the utterance of a gruff, "Come along, you," dragged Tyrawley's antagonist by the collar, his heels scraping uncomfortably on the road, through the spectators, and administering a few boxes on the ear, sent him flying, by a parting shove, down a steepish side-street. Mr. Naylor, for it was he, then returned, with a view of rebuking his gentleman gov'nor for "getting in with that low lot"; but, seeing him standing on the pavement in conversation with another swell, he modestly withdrew.

What had happened meanwhile was this: The

woman whom Tyrawley had rescued from the brutality of her husband still hung around, crying, "Oh, my dear! you meant it kind to me, and you have a pretty face to go home with; but you did hit my master cruel, and you're always at it, from what I hears, fighting other blokes and protecting females!"

These words reached the ears of Mr. Paget, and brought a cold sneer to his lips. He strolled up to the unlucky Tyrawley, who, endeavoring to wipe the blood and mud from his face, had only succeeded in making himself look more disreputable than ever, and said :

"A most admirable character!"

They faced one another—the respectable Pharisee in spotless linen and broadcloth; the unhappy publican, with the torn fragment of his jersey hanging off a whiter shirt-sleeve than usually belongs to the British coster, with that aspect of ruffianism which is imparted by hair over the eyes, and a countenance variegated by cuts and bruises; with dilated nostrils and galloping heart.

For once Tyrawley was not cool, for he saw the fabric of that castle in the air he had reared with so much pain, falling upon and crushing him.

"Are you going," he panted, "to tell *her* this?"

"Which—the fight, or the female? If I do, I shall not ask your permission, my good man. The hero of a street brawl must expect to be public property."

Tyrawley's fingers twitched longingly. Mr. Paget's immaculate turned-down collar presented for the moment an almost irresistible temptation. They glared at one another like two stags about to charge. Then Tyrawley thought better of it, forced a laugh, and a short — "Thanks, I only wanted to know," from between his clenched teeth, and turned on his heel with white lips and a moral and physical heart-sinking hard to hear; while Mr. Paget proceeded jauntily on his way. But the hero of this ignoble battle pulled himself together doggedly after a moment, remembering the high courage and tender trust of which he had had some proof already.

Mr. Tyrawley leaned his head on his hands and looked rather careworn when he reached his eyrie. He had borrowed a bottle of half-dried ink from his landlady, and purchased a pennyworth of stationery on his way, but now he sat with it before him, and found the letter hard to write, because he wanted to say so much and could say so little. He wrote it at last, however; the self-restraint to which he was inured by past and present standing him in good stead :

"MY DEAR MISS ST. JUST:

"Your cousin, Mr. Paget, has seen me under circumstances which tell so much against me that I feel I have a right to give some explana-

tion; especially, as he not only gave me no chance of doing so, but declared his purpose of telling you what he saw.

"I know it looked awfully bad, and my appearance must have been very disreputable; but you will understand it all when I explain what I have only kept from you because I was afraid you would overrate the hardships of my present life. I am earning my living honestly, for the first time, by selling fruit at a street-stall. Pray don't be too much shocked, or in the least grieved; I am much more comfortable than you can possibly imagine. The life is healthy and clean, though a little rough; my fellow-merchants are civil and jolly, and I am getting on well. I go to church every Sunday, and, by God's grace, I have kept and improved on my promises.

"As to the row in which your cousin saw me engaged, I was defending a poor little woman from a murderous attack, and, if only for your sake, I could do no less, and would do it again, for I am sure of your approval. So please forgive appearances, and believe this is the whole truth. You and your mother will understand why I don't write what I long to write. I hope you will honor me by accepting my photo in full costume. Yours no eye has ever seen since dear old MacAdam gave it to me. I hope you are enjoying yourself. Let no thought of me bother you, or make you in the least anxious.

All is well. Do not trouble to answer this, if Mrs. St. Just objects. I never want to be a sorrow to you again. God bless you.

“Always believe me,

“Your humble servant,

“I. T.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### A BUSINESS BANQUET

THE St. Justs had encamped on the seashore; the blue waves of the Mediterranean, crystal-edged, lipped lazily on the golden sand; the violet hills lay behind them; the white villas glittered like mother-of-pearl in the meridian sunlight.

Mrs. St. Just dozed in the shadow of a rock; Bertie prospected for shells and bits of coral, southern languor failing to tame his national restlessness; Nina read and dreamed by turns.

A small Italian boy, son of one of their servants, darted like a brown butterfly across the rocks and sands with a letter for the signorina, to which he added the information, scarcely heard and altogether unrealized, that an English lord was on his way from the Villa Perla, to throw himself at the feet of the ladies.

The attention of one of the latter was at the moment far too much occupied with the fortunes or misfortunes of one British costermonger to be diverted by a whole House of Lords, and it was perhaps scarcely a propitious hour for the arrival of Mr. John Paget; which, nevertheless, took



place just as Nina had read Tyrawley's letter for the second time.

Under her still aspect there was a tempest of powerless pain and indignation, which the heroism of careless cheerfulness, which made light of his own hardships, and tenderly guarded her from annoyance,—even his reticence from open expressions of devotion,—rather increased than abated.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Paget's offered hand met no response save a frozen glance.

"My child," cried Mrs. St. Just, "don't you see your cousin?"

"Yes, I see him," said Miss Nina, with the tip of her lips. Then she averted her eyes, as some people do from toads or lizards.

His fell on the letter in her hand, and he divined the truth, and developed a chilly spitefulness, not unlike that of some smaller reptiles. "My dear aunt," he said, "my cousin is not to blame for her pleasant demeanor; for I think I am right in supposing that that very objectionable person Tyrawley, who caused us such annoyance last autumn, has thrust on her a garbled account of a certain discreditable affair, of which he knew I should give you a true version on my arrival. Come and shake hands, Bertie."

But Bertie stood afar off, with folded arms, like an infant Napoleon, and said, "Sha'n't!"

"Oh, dear me, John!" said Mrs. St. Just, collapsing on her cushions and shawls. "I do

wish, I'm sure, we had never set eyes on that man; for his manners were certainly lovely, though, no doubt, a take-in."

"Mr. Tyrawley was perfectly sincere," said her step-daughter. "When we are *alone* I'll read you his letter," and she flashed a glance of defiance like summer lightning at Mr. Paget, who merely elevated his chin, spread a silk pocket-handkerchief on a smooth rock, and seated himself calmly upon it.

"Oh, show the letter to your cousin John, my dear; he is a far better judge than I am, and quarrels in families are so dreadful," sighed Mrs. St. Just.

But Nina drew her slender brows together, and shook her small head with a gesture which needed no verbal confirmation.

"Well, my dear aunt," said Mr. Paget, "I don't like to speak of these things before girls, but my cousin needs to be made aware of the real pursuits of the person whose cause she takes up so ardently."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, tell us the truth, John," said his aunt.

"I only stay," remarked Miss Nina pleasantly, "to hear what falsehoods Mr. Paget will tell."

Bertie encouraged his sister after the fashion of small boys applauding one another at cricket—"Good old Nina!" and Mr. Paget began his narrative with the air of a superior martyr.

"I was going," said he, "to lunch with my friends the Thirlbys at Grasswich, and as I have had a touch of liver complaint of late, I walked across from a place which you, my dear aunt, have probably never heard of—a low, working-man sort of a place called Plebham. In the main street I found a most disreputable crowd collected, and as I took a circuit, to avoid being shouldered by cads, my eye fell on two men and a woman, who were engaged in a drunken brawl, at which even some of the low people standing by cried 'Shame!' for a big man was knocking about a little one, because, apparently, the latter had objected to the endearments the former was offering to his wife.

"I could not pollute your ears or my cousin's with the expressions they used,—the vilest language of the slums, of course,—but you may imagine my dismay when I recognized in the big bully, who was in rags, covered with mud and blood, and evidently intoxicated, a man who had the impudence to force himself on your acquaintance—the swindler Tyrawley."

At this juncture Mr. Paget uttered a natural cry of pain, for a small pebble, winged by the unerring hand of Master Bertie, had smitten him on the nose.

"For shame, Bertie!" said his mother.

"He sha'n't tell such *bally* lies about my friends," cried he, collecting fresh ammunition.

Nina called him to her fondly. "Come here,

darling," said she. "You can't do him any good by that; but *we* believe in him, don't we?"

"Rather!" said he. "I mean sticking to him through thick and thin. I know if Tyrawley was knocking about a littler chap than himself, he must have been sneaking, or beating a woman, or something."

Nina kissed him admiringly, and Mrs. St. Just, though murmuring that he was only a child, and could not know as well as his dear cousin, looked rather uncertain.

"I spoke to the fellow," said Mr. John Paget, much aggravated, "and he scarcely denied it; and I found on enquiry that he is, in fact, one of a gang of common costermongers, and that he, and a bosom friend of his, as big a ruffian as himself, are the terror of the neighborhood. After this painful occurrence, my dear aunt," he added, "can it be your wish that my cousin should be in touch with him in the slightest degree?"

Nina rose up, tall and stately, with a fierce color in her usually pale cheeks, and, standing by her mother's shoulder, held the letter she had just received under her eyes.

She puzzled it out, with muttered "Dear me's," and a suspicious dimness of her eye-glasses, and looked helplessly from her daughter to her nephew. "He certainly explains it beautifully," said she. "And he always was most gentlemanly, and, of course, we know a man may rise from sixpence in his pocket to millions. I'm sure

I don't know what to think, for John has only your interests at heart, have you, John, and the honor of the family?"

"Exactly, my dear aunt. I feel certain my cousin will see her folly some day."

"She does now," said Miss Nina, "in listening to another word from *you*. Thank you, mother, for speaking so kindly of Mr. Tyrawley."

Then she took back the letter, and walked away with Bertie's arm round her waist, allowing that young gentleman to read it, much to his satisfaction and importance.

"I say, Nin," said he presently, looking up into her face, "are you going to marry Tyrawley?"

"Perhaps he won't ask me."

"Yes, he does sing precious small, doesn't he? My eye! I wouldn't be any girl's 'humble servant.' Well, if he shouldn't, I'll tell you what you must do—I've read of lots of princesses and swells like that doing it—you must ask him to marry you!"

"I think," said she, with a blush, "I had better wait a little while for that."

"Oh, yes!" said he, giving her a hug. "There's no hurry; I ain't tired of you yet."

Mr. Paget's visit was scarcely an agreeable episode to any of the party, except, perhaps, Bertie, who, like the stormy petrel, enjoyed troubled waves. Mrs. St. Just, who was, above all things, good-natured, and who could not for-

get the agreeable courtesies of Mr. Tyrawley, had been considerably touched by his letter; which Mr. Paget perceiving, his hatred for that unlucky individual naturally waxed much stronger. Nina, except in public, sent him virtually to Coventry, while Bertie went the length of brushes in his bed and pins in his chair. So, after a very short visit, he departed in a huff, with a cold, inner resolution, scarcely perhaps owned to himself, that Tyrawley should stand between him and his relatives no more.

*Mrs. St. Just to Mr. Tyrawley*

“DEAR MR. TYRAWLEY :

“I cannot see what business it is of my Nina’s whether you were fighting or not; but she is so headstrong—for all the world like my poor dear man—that she says she or I *must* answer your letter. She will have me say that she thinks you were perfectly right; but, of course, at my age I think you ought to have given him in charge of the police, instead of mixing yourself up with such horrid people; for though I don’t hold with you in most things, I don’t think you would hurt any body in that way, and I do think that dear John, although he is such an excellent young man, may have made a mistake, because he never fights himself, and doesn’t know what vice is. I am glad to hear you have given up billiards and all that, but it is a pity you did not

drive a hansom cab, or something of that sort, as most fast young men who have lost their money do.

"My children send their love, and I am still grateful to you for saving their lives, though I am sure we have had no peace in our family since we knew you.

"With kind regards,

"Yours sincerely,

"M. A. ST. JUST." X

Mr. Tyrawley read this epistle with mingled feelings. The touch of kindness toward himself was cheering; but, though unselfish, he was human, and longed for a word from Nina herself.

The novelty of his position having worn off, its comic side became less apparent and its monotony settled heavily upon him. Mr. Naylor, though most friendly, had a bounded horizon, and he had no other companions. However, he worked early and late, solacing himself by an occasional visit to the free library, where his fellow-visitors were much edified by the spectacle of a coster reading Homer and Dante, in the original; and yet more by his going to church on Sundays, where he always felt nearer Nina than anywhere else, and whence he always came with a light on his face which astonished Mr. Naylor, who regarded church-going merely as a function calculated at the best to produce a wholesome



depression and thoughts of a man's latter end; nor could Tyrawley induce him to accompany him thither.

"If I go anywhere," he remarked, "it'll be among them Salvationists. I might take a sort of fancy to them, being used to shouting; but my missis, she don't approve of slips of girls setting up to teach their grandmothers, so I ain't on at present."

In a few weeks a shade of unaccountable mystery was visible in Mr. Naylor. He gave his gentleman guv'nor less advice and more compliments, observed him cautiously during business hours, and hinted at some vast but dim project. Finally, he one day abruptly invited him to tea at his own residence.

It was by no means the first time Mr. Tyrawley had tasted his hospitality, but there was something formal and ceremonial in his manner, and that of his little threadpaper of a partner, on whose forehead Mr. Naylor's "goings on" at intervals had imprinted many anxious wrinkles.

She was attired in a stiff and crackling silk, an apocryphal lace collar, and a brooch like an heraldic shield; while tea was laid, not in the cosey little kitchen, but in the tiny parlor, gaudy and chill, whose glories increased the solemn pomp of Mr. Naylor's demeanor. Every Plebham delicacy in season was spread on the board; the toothsome whelk, the alluring mussel, the modest cockle, were flanked by

tinned lobster and odoriferous bloater. Fruit, as too commonplace, was at a discount, and intoxicants were omitted out of compliment to Mr. Tyrawley's presence.

Mrs. Naylor's tea was, however, as black as ink, and tasted strongly of a new and glittering plated teapot.

"Piper's best," remarked Mr. Naylor, doing the honors with a graceful wave of the hand. "His fresh butter likewise—no margarine there; and I'll answer for it them herrin's don't hum. I should have liked," he added pensively, "just a drop to make a cove a bit balmy. 'There's some would go the length of a 'tin hat,'\* or even a 'brass helmet,'\* on such an event; but I know it ain't your way, so it's no good."

Mrs. Naylor, shedding at the door a large white apron, now took her place behind the tea-tray, while her husband, after breathing hard for a moment, ducked his head and muttered—"For which be thankful," with an indistinct idea of consummating matters by the rites of religion. He then, with an air of much relief and lightness of heart, concentrated all the dishes on the table round his guest's plate, and invited him to "fall to."

It is difficult to acquire, late in life, a taste for the smaller shell-fish, and Tyrawley's small appetite was an ever fresh disappointment to the Naylor, for which his extreme courtesy could

\* Plebham idioms for stages of intoxication.

hardly make up. However, the meal was finished at last, and Mrs. Naylor, at a wink from her lord, quitted the room.

The latter then cleared a space for his elbows on the table, and propping his large hairless chin on his horny palms, said ponderously :

“My gentleman guv’nor, you and I have been pardners in the barrow trade these sixteen weeks, and never a wrong word betwixt us ; and you done wonderful, *wonderful*, considering what you are, and what I and t’other blokes is ; but”—and he laid his knobbly forefinger impressively on the other’s arm—“you’re too good for us, and that’s no lie, for there’s many says it besides me. You want something genteel and tiptop, *you* do ; and Jim Naylor’s the chap, unless I’m most uncommonly mistaken, to p’int out that very thing to you.”

“My dear Jim, you’re awfully kind, I’m sure ; but there’s a trifling obstacle which, perhaps, you’ve overlooked ; but I haven’t, because”—with a slight sigh, and a vision of something very different to Mr. Naylor’s parlor—“it is always getting in my way. Genteel and tiptop things cost money, old fellow ; and I haven’t got it.”

“Got a little, ain’t you, in the savings bank ?” pleaded Mr. Naylor. “What might it run to now ? Excuse my asking.”

“Certainly,” said the polite Tyrawley. “It runs,” he added accurately, “to three pounds,

seventeen shillings, and twopence three farthings."

"A-a-h!" said Mr. Naylor. "I pretty well knew, 'cos, you see, you don't spend nothing, 'cept on grub and soap and water. But why," he added persuasively, "shouldn't you and Jim, what you knocked down like a skittle, and picked up and treated like a nobleman, go pardners in something better than a barrow?" Here his persuasiveness changed suddenly into triumph, and he shouted at the top of his voice, "It's a *shop*, my gentleman guv'nor. There you are!" and pushed under Mr. Tyrawley's nose a simple but formal agreement for the occupation and tenancy of No. 1 Gregory Street, High Street, Plebham, by — and — on the one side, and William Smith on the other. Tyrawley was a little taken aback at the suddenness of the suggestion; but perceiving that Jim was no more excited than was natural at the crisis of his carefully prepared drama, gave full and earnest attention to that worthy's explanations.

"It ain't big," said he, "nor fashionable at present, nor decorated. It'll lay with you to make it that last, and have all the best in Plebham coming in their one-horse shays to buy. It'll come cheap, 'cos there ain't no good-will nor fixtures to pay for, seeing as the last bloke that had it was on the loose continual, and let it run down to nothing, and ripped up the counter for firewood to bile his grog, and then made a moon-

light flitting. Still, I ain't sorry, for I do hear as the landlord is the nearest old file going, though rolling in wealth. If you can put that there three pound in, and I puts five to it, we can do it to start with—stock, fixtures, and every thing. Not as *I* shall be there. Oh, no!"—and Mr. Naylor smiled elaborately. "Me! I don't know nothing about shopkeeping. I'm a coster, I am. I can shout and blarney, and bully-rag my own sort. 'But you go round the corner, mum, and you'll find at the fruiterer's shop a toff as can talk to you in your own way, and sell you a pen'orth 'o tummuts as if he was spouting poetry out of a book, which he done me, a pore coster, several good turns, an' I'll do him one in return, if I can.' Which," said Mr. Naylor, dropping his tone of affected artlessness, "is true, you may take your oath of it."

"It appears to me," said Tyrawley, rather moved, "that the good turns are all on your side."

"No, they ain't. You just ast the missis if I've ever gone on the straight long enough to buy her a silk gownd before, and a brooch as big as a cheese-plate, and ain't hit her—well, I don't know *when*," said Mr. Naylor, in deep self-admiration.

Then he took Mr. Tyrawley to look at the outside of the shop, which was a sort of excrescence on the front of a fair-sized house. Its dingy and battered shutters were closed, and the name

of the last possessor, Caleb Collier, was scarcely visible for the mud with which the youth of Plebham had bespattered the shop-front. But it seemed to possess capabilities; and then the rent—eight shillings a week—sounded so very low; and a start could be made at once, at the best season for cheap foreign fruit; and Mr. Tyrawley felt, with some justifiable pride, that he had mastered a considerable amount of useful knowledge of the trade.

“Them young rascals won’t come annoying you here, nor no young women either, wanting to know if you’re suited with a ‘tart,’” remarked Jim.

Mr. Tyrawley blushed.

“And you won’t take no notice of me, nor me of you, except passing the time of day, as my barrow being near your shop, and me”—and he chuckled immensely—“a decent kind of a chap, for a coster.”

So the matter was virtually settled, and in due time Mr. Tyrawley found himself part owner of the Fruit Stores, 1 Gregory Street, Plebham. He would have put his name over the door, but for one very, very distant and utterly dream-like possibility.

## CHAPTER XX

### HUNTED DOWN

THE business prospered, though with that slow and infinitesimal success which is the lot of those whose capital is small, and who, therefore, can neither risk nor gain much. Rates and taxes, and the numerous small outgoings which beset even the tenant of twelve feet by ten, made the work much more anxious than that at the barrow had been; and Mr. Tyrawley was, strange to say, far more nervous and scrupulous about small debts, and what are called "business practices," than the ordinary run of petty traders. Then he became rather uneasy about his own health; because sickness meant beggary. The long hours in the little gas-heated shop, and the cold market mornings, did not suit him so well as the open air. He caught cold upon cold; grew thin and hollow-eyed, and had a settled, hacking cough; all of which facts he scrupulously kept from MacAdam, lest that worthy physician should place before him the alternative of taking a fortnight's rest, or having his physical condition reported to Miss St. Just. Indeed, just because he felt ill and had a super-



stitious notion that she would somehow divine it, he ventured, having his promised photograph to send, to write to her mother, and wrote very cheerfully; drawing such a bright picture of his daily existence that the proud, sensitive girl, conscious of the slightness of the tie between them, felt he was almost too happy without her. He did not look ill in his photo, and having on reflection eschewed the jersey for that occasion, not wishing to pose as a martyr, rather overdid things. So she wrote very cheerfully and rather conventionally in return; and the unfortunate lover felt proportionately snubbed and downcast. However, he worked on fiercely, early and late, in spite of the remonstrances of the faithful Jim, and was in a very fair way to cut the Gordian knot of his difficulties by working himself to death, when a new and serious complication arose.

A restlessness, quite foreign to Mr. J. Paget's well-regulated mind, had beset that gentleman since his return from abroad; it carried him once or twice into High Street, Plebham; but, of course, he never saw the object of his visit, who was safely ensconced behind his own counter in Gregory Street.

At last he took a resolution to question the first costermonger he should see, and chanced on Mr. Naylor, who, trade being slack and the morning warm, was leaning in an attitude of agreeable languor against a lamp-post near his barrow.

"Good-morning," said Mr. Paget. Mr. Naylor,

whose manners were primitive, merely stared. He was apt to attach an undue importance to muscular development in the male of his own species, and Mr. Paget's five foot six of long body and short legs, surmounted by a rather mean head, did not impress him. "I think," said Paget, endeavoring to be amiably patronizing, "I think I've seen you about here before."

"Might," said Jim, not removing his pipe, "or, similarly, mightn't. What d'yer want?"

Mr. Paget had not expected so pointed a query. "I—er—should be so much obliged, my good man——" he began.

"No," said Jim, expectorating with a suddenness which caused his questioner to retire precipitately. "Don't yer come that, my jolly toff; I ain't a good man, but a bad 'un, as cuts up rough when he's aggrawated wi' questions."

Mr. Paget was not without courage; few people whose self-esteem is high are; moreover, he was animated by two feelings which make even cowards bold—love and hatred. So, accommodating himself, as far as he knew how, to Jim's humor, he said, "Ah! rough and ready, I see. Pray can you tell me any thing about a—a person named Tyrawley, who, I think, followed the same calling as yourself somewhere here?"

Mr. Naylor stiffened, and glowered down with his small, fierce blue eyes at the other, taking in, with the instinct of a mischievous child, what would be the most annoying reply to make.

"Him?" said he deliberately. "You mean 'Gentleman Lee'? He ain't in my line now. Not he; should say he was a big swell, what only took to it for a lark or a wager—not as you or me might. He's got a stores now, he has; and before long he'll have 'em in all parts of London. Making a pot of money, he is!"

"He's a sharp man of business, is he, then?" enquired Mr. Paget, with a sickly grin.

"Sharp?" said Mr. Naylor. "I should think he was. Sharp! Cuts 'em all out, he does. Top o' the tree, he'll be. And I know," added he, with the air of one strictly understating the truth, "his landlord thinks so, too. Means to offer him the whole block of shops. He's a downy cove, Smith of Grasswich is; made his own pile in trade, and knows a clever bloke when he sees one."

"An upright man?" said Paget carelessly.

"Dun'no' about upright," returned Jim, with a stare; "must be getting on in life—a bit stooped in the shoulders."

"I mean," said Mr. Paget, "fair, honorable?"

"Fair and square, and likes other people fair and square, too. Turns his tenants out, if they ain't."

Mr. Paget's chill eye lightened, and his heart was uplifted within him. He saw light at the end of the very humbling underground path he had been treading.

"Indeed!" said he, with an indifference poor

Jim quite failed to penetrate. "I think, now you mention his name, some friends of mine at Grass-wich know him. A large house, has he not?"

"I believe yer. And two matched parlor-maids like a pair of ponies, 'cos he can't abear flunkeys, and only one 'oss for his brougham; but he *is* a 'oss. And a cob that's up to fifteen stone, and yet as good bred as a Derby winner. Ah, he *is* a man, he is!" And Mr. Naylor smacked his lips and spat admiringly.

"A kind man?" suggested Mr. Paget innocently. "As he rose from small beginnings himself, would take a servant without a character, and so on?"

"Well, you *are* a soft!" replied the scornful Naylor, "not to know them sort's always the 'ardest over any little bit of a slip. Why, he's down on 'em like a cartload o' bricks, in course, and says justice comes afore mercy."

Mr. Paget sang a little tune in the gayety of his heart, and remarked that doubtless this side of Mr. W. Smith's character would not concern Mr.—Mr.—T. Rawley.

"Not it," said the exultant Jim. "He's all right, he is. If he weren't, would all the ladies take to him like they do?"

"Do they, indeed?"

Mr. Naylor, nettled by what he thought scepticism, asseverated, even with blasphemies, that they did; and related real and imaginary instances of the effects of Mr. Tyrawley's looks

and ways, which Mr. Paget took in with an amount of faith quite touching in so clear-headed a gentleman.

“And where,” said he, as he casually tendered Mr. Naylor a small coin, and thanked him for his agreeable conversation, “is this accomplished gentleman’s business residence?”

Perhaps it was the smallness of the coin, perhaps a touch of eagerness in the tone, which suddenly, and late, aroused Mr. Naylor’s suspicions, for he replied, with a gloomy brow and considerable rudeness :

“That ain’t no business of yours. And look here, my fine feller, I don’t know whether you’re a ’torney’s clerk, or what, but I do know if you jabbers to me any more——” And he exhibited, close to Mr. Paget’s nose, four grimy and powerful knuckles, which caused his instant retreat.

Fortune, however, favored him; for, turning down the next street, and happening to glance in at a shop window, he beheld the very object of his search. He drew himself together for a moment, with the fixed eye of an animal catching sight of its natural prey, then strode superciliously in.

It was a warm morning, one of those mornings which are pleasant for idling, but fatiguing for work, and Mr. Tyrawley was in his shirt-sleeves—which were colored, because washing is expensive—perspiring at every pore, because he was

weak, and with his hair in damp masses on his forehead, because even hair-cutting costs something.

He looked, moreover, haggard and grimy; lifting heavy fruit-hampers being incompatible with gentlemanly ease and the more delicate extremes of cleanliness. He was speeding two rough boys on their morning errands; serving two fat women with onions and turnips, and hurriedly jotting down accounts with a hand that trembled from overstrain of mind and body, while he replied, in a rather faint and sickly manner, to the witty remarks of a neighbor and customer, who was leaning on the little counter, eating a squashy banana.

Mr. Paget glanced round the dingy little shop, which all the scrubbing in the world would not brighten; observed the patches on Tyrawley's shirt, the shabbiness of his professional blue apron; how much the homely onion and orange predominated over more aristocratic matters in his modest stock, and perceived that Mr. Naylor's account had been highly colored.

He saw also, however, with a grudging admiration, how desperately—and not altogether unsuccessfully—his rival was struggling; and a desperate rival is dangerous.

Their eyes met, as they had met in the road after Tyrawley's fight; but there was no greeting beyond that look. Tyrawley was haughtily, and the other spitefully, silent. At last he said patronizingly:



"Come, this is better than gambling or street-fighting. But you do not appear to improve in health, Mr. Tyrawley."

Now, Tyrawley was fagged out of self-control, and acutely conscious of his own disadvantages as to appearance, and of the fact of Paget being more than usually cool, smug, and speckless. Moreover, people whose hearts are weak are physically inclined to irritability. So he turned white with passion, and panted under his breath:

"Leave this place, please!"

"I want," said Mr. Paget calmly, "six bananas, if they are good."

One of the fat women smiled amiably. She had not caught Mr. Tyrawley's angry whisper, and was congratulating him on a new and well-dressed customer; but she was undeceived next moment. A scarlet danger-spot appeared on Mr. Tyrawley's cheek.

"If you don't go——" he exclaimed—aloud this time. A long arm shot across the counter pointed the observation.

The prudent enemy backed a step or two. "You must be mad, or drunk, to speak so to a gentleman," he said. "However," and he turned away, "I'll see you again."

The fat woman went away too, sorrowing and puzzled, and Tyrawley sat down, dejected.

"That beggar was bitter enough against me already," said he, "and, like a fool, I've made him ten thousand times worse by my cheek—as



he no doubt considers it. He means me some ill, I can see plainly enough, but I don't know what he can do that he hasn't done. I've got a clean sheet here, that's one comfort, whoever he may ask."

A few minutes later Mr. Naylor, with the stealthy tread and backward glance of the stage villain, appeared on the threshold, and, closing the door elaborately behind him, pointed with his thumb over his shoulder and enquired hoarsely.

"Pal of yours?"

"Quite on the contrary," said Mr. Tyrawley.

"My greatest enemy, Jim, except myself."

Jim smote his large thigh penitently. "Busted if I didn't think so! And here have I been talking to him like a brother for the best half of ten minutes."

"What about?" said Tyrawley dejectedly.

"Why, the big trade you was doing—cracked it up like one o'clock, I did. But why the p'lice-man should he want to know if your landlord was a hard 'un or a soft 'un?"

Mr. Tyrawley's eyes widened hopelessly. "Oh, I see!" said he very gently.

"See what, my gentleman guv'nor? Tell us," entreated the penitent Naylor. "Ain't been and upset your apple-cart, have I?"

"I'm afraid, my dear Jim, it's just what you have done. But never mind, old chap. That swell has resolved to hunt me down, sooner or

later," said Tyrawley bitterly. "What he will do now is to find out my landlord, and give him a dramatized version of my past career, which I have sketched for you."

"But," objected Mr. Naylor feebly, "what's a trick or two with cards, or a pea and thimble, or that?"

"Enough to spoil me, I'm afraid. I may as well shut up shop before I bring my ill-luck on you, my esteemed partner." And he sat down on a pile of baskets and stared doggedly into vacancy.

Mr. Naylor whistled and stuck his thumbs into his trousers pockets, and there was silence for a minute or two within the shop; while without, in the sunshine, the usual workaday noises of a London suburb sounds rather languidly through the warm air. It seemed to Mr. Tyrawley that the small footing he had gained with such labor and pain on Fortune's slippery ladder was sliding away. A gleam and a waft of light, color, perfume, from a far-off Italian seashore; its purple hills, its flowery fields, its silver sea, seemed to drift toward him and then be blotted out by a black cloud of despair. His body was sick and aching, and his soul faint.

"Old man," said he wearily, looking up at Mr. Naylor, "there's nothing doing, and I don't feel over well. I think I'll go to my diggings and get to bed."

Jim stared with unmeasured surprise, slightly

tinged with reproach. "Guv'nor," he exclaimed pathetically, "you ain't never funk'g 'cos of that whipper-snapper?"

"You don't understand," said Tyrawley, rather stung by the touch of scorn he thought he detected in Mr. Naylor's wonder. "Fists ain't every thing, Jim."

"I should like to show him they was sumfin, though," said Naylor. "Why," he added pleadingly, "you could tackle him with your eyes shut, and one hand tied behind you."

"I'm afraid," replied Tyrawley, smiling faintly, "he's more likely to tackle me. I'm about tired of fighting, to tell the truth."

"What have you done to him?" demanded Mr. Naylor. "Took his tart away, or what?"

"He hasn't got a 'tart' that I'm aware of," replied Tyrawley evasively (he had not confided his love-story to Jim), "but he hates me like poison."

"Well," muttered Jim, "if him and me ever comes across one another——" An ugly look finished that part of the sentence; then he resumed, with forced cheerfulness, "Look here, my gentleman guv'nor, you brace up a bit and stick to the shop, and I'll send the lad round to tell my missis to bring you a cup of tea and a bit of toast, which is the only thing as I can take when I've got the bile. She can keep shop while you're having it, which she's good at, through having been a kitching-maid in high families, and learned manners, which I never could."

Tyrawley assented with languid gratitude, too much cast down to combat any thing, and Mr. Naylor retired. When clear of the shop he went through a remarkable pantomime. He placed himself in an approved position of attack, rather than defence, danced a short, grave war-dance on the pavement, to the delight of several small boys, remarked to one of them, "Yes, my game-chick, that 'll do," took a coin from his pocket, spat on it, and, looking in the direction in which Mr. Paget had retired, sang fervently, but without any intention of profanity—for he did not know from whence it came—two lines of a popular hymn:

"Will you meet me at the fountain?  
I should *love* to have *you* there!"

and, calmed by these semi-religious exercises, returned to his barrow.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THAT LITTLE VIPER

THAT same afternoon Mr. Paget, having paid a polite visit to his friends the Thirlbys, at Grass-wich, casually asked Mrs. Thirlby, at its close, if she would mind giving him a line of introduction to her neighbor, Mr. William Smith of The Oaks. "I hear he owns a large amount of house property at Plebham," said he, "and I have a small sum I had some thought of investing in that direction. I've no doubt he could give me most valuable advice. Would it be out of place, do you think, if I were to call there now?"

Mrs. Thirlby opined that business was never out of place with Mr. Smith. "Business is every thing to that dear man," said she, with that attempt at fashionable flippancy noticeable in City ladies. "He was, you know, a Catholic, but somebody of his own religion cheated him egregiously, and now, though he has not made any profession of being a Protestant, he has withdrawn every penny of support from Catholic institutions."

The note was given, and Mr. Paget departed, quietly exultant.

The Oaks was ponderously handsome and

studiously plain in every particular of house and garden. The study was no cosey male boudoir, littered with pipes and novels, or curios and *éditions de luxe*, but, as Mr. Smith delighted to call it, an office, with piles of papers and ledgers. This further inspirited Mr. Paget. Here was soil ready for the seed he proposed to sow. He sent in Mrs. Thirlby's note, and Mr. Smith shortly appeared. He was tall, stout, erect; his countenance obstinate, but not mean; his eye cold and penetrating, but straightforward; a solid nose, broadish in the bridge, but not fleshy; a long upper lip.

"Well, sir," he said, nodding to his visitor, "what can I do for you?"

Mr. Paget returned the greeting with agreeable respect, and entered at some length into the object of his visit.

Now Mr. Smith had a mania, strictly controlled by caution and acuteness, for investments—his own or his friends'. He would invest in a business, a man, a horse, which appeared unremunerative to others, but which rarely failed to justify his fancy. So he listened complacently to his visitor's statements, and was specially interested on learning that his desires tended toward house property in Plebham.

"I have a considerable amount there myself," he remarked, "chiefly managed by my agent, though I occasionally run over. Nothing like personal supervision, sir."



"I am a careful man myself," replied Mr. Paget modestly, "but a mere tyro in investment; that is why I sought this favor."

A discussion on the merits of Plebham as a rising suburb followed, and for a moment Mr. Paget had a golden vision of becoming the landlord of his enemy and instantly turning him out; but this choice prospect vanished when Mr. Smith remarked that some of the smaller streets of Plebham, notably, Manor, Hazel, and Gregory, would be gold-mines some day.

"Two of them, I may say," he added, "I own entirely."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Paget with flattering interest. "Why, my dear sir, I think I happen to know something about one of your tenants. I was passing through Plebham to-day, and, very much to my surprise, saw him, apparently at home, behind the counter of a most respectable little shop in one of the streets you mention."

"I hope that what you know is to the man's credit," said Mr. Smith, with a grim smile.

"Well," said Mr. Paget, as if the avowal were forced out of him, "scarcely. I'm very reluctant to speak evil of any body, but after your extreme kindness, sir, in placing your valuable experience at the disposal of a stranger, I feel it my duty to tell you what I know."

Smith was too keen a man not to see that this virtuous reluctance was in some measure assumed, so he very calmly said, "Would you object



to stating facts and name?" and waited for more.

"The place I saw him in," replied Mr. Paget, "was called, I think, the Fruit Stores; and I may mention, in passing, that it looked extremely dirty. His customers seemed to be of the lowest class,—chiefly women,—and when I proposed to purchase a little fruit, his manner was most abusive—indeed, the fellow actually had the impudence to order me out of the shop, with a threatening gesture. But I think," he added, with an air of strict impartiality, "from his appearance, which was most slovenly and disreputable, that he had been drinking, and scarcely knew what he was doing. I was informed that he is a great man among the lowest order of costermongers there—quite their hero—and the name he goes by is, I am told, 'Gentleman Lee.'"

"You inferred," said Mr. Smith, with a grimness which boded ill for the proprietor of the Fruit Stores, "that you had known the man previously. May I ask his character and circumstances then?"

"Distinctly shady, I regret to say," answered Mr. Paget, with gusto. "He was, in fact, a thorough sharper, a *chevalier d'industrie*—quite a notorious character at Claretown, where he had the insolence to force his acquaintance on some relatives of my own—a widowed aunt and her children. They were simple enough to invite

him to their country-house (for the fellow's manners are plausible, and even gentlemanly), but I soon detected the imposture and expelled him at once. The name he went by there—no doubt another alias—was Tyrawley."

Had Mr. Paget not been too much occupied with his own passions, he would here have perceived a phenomenon most uncommon in Mr. Smith. He started. It was the very slightest of starts—a lifting of the eyelid, a tightening of the lip—no more.

"Indeed," he said, with even more than his usual deliberation, "I thank you for the information, which tallies with something which has reached me. I shall make a point of seeing the man and his shop the next time I visit Plebham, and shall probably get rid of him."

"He is a dangerous, insolent person," said Mr. Paget, with a little too much warmth; "and I am sure you would do well."

Mr. Smith made no further remark on the subject till ten minutes later, when Mr. Paget was taking his leave, who, feeling he could not bear to be ignorant of the probable downfall of his enemy, asked, with much humility:

"Will you allow me the honor of calling on you again, should I be in the neighborhood?"

"Certainly," said the other; "and I shall hope to tell you that your friend has left it."

A quicker ear than Mr. Paget's might have discerned a certain tinge of distaste in Mr.

Smith's manner ; but Mr. Paget saw it not, and went away cheerful.

The proceedings of Mr. Smith were now, for a person of his character, very remarkable. He stood for full two minutes where his visitor had left him, without moving a muscle ; then he slowly and thoughtfully ascended the broad oak staircase to his bedroom, locked the door, opened the secret drawer of a mahogany secretaire, and extracted therefrom a small, faded water-color sketch, representing a big, pale boy with a thick nose, and a tiny, blue-eyed girl, hand in hand, in the ungraceful dress of forty or fifty years back. He looked at this work of art for a long time, shaded his eyes with his hand, sighed, looked at it again. A stern and ugly look passed across his face ; a soft and even wistful one replaced it ; finally, he put back the drawing and made an appointment with himself in his pocket-book for the morrow : "Plebham, Tyrawley, Gregory Street, 2.30."

Next day an elderly gentleman of commanding presence, in speckless broadcloth, with a watch-chain and seal-ring whose weight and worth commanded the deepest reverence of the shopmen, walked into Brass's, the watchmaker's, in High Street, Plebham, and requesting that some small repair might be done straightway to the ring of his watch, conversed affably with the assistant meanwhile. After a few casual questions, he enquired if the jeweller had good neighbors.

"Oh, yes, sir ; most respectable ! Marks & Jones, across the road, have been established forty years ; Mr. Hewlet, next door, thirty. Our left-hand neighbor, in the ham-and-beef line, isn't much ; but beyond him, round the corner, there is a little fruit-shop, and, though you mightn't think it, the proprietor, Mr. Tyrawley, is quite the gentleman."

"Indeed ! Idle and fine and so on, I suppose ?"

"Oh, no, sir ; far from it !" said Mr. Brass's assistant, who knew Tyrawley, and was half fascinated by his easy, yet lofty, courtesy. "He works like a brick," he added, his youthful ardor making him forget to choose his words. "And he's really getting a capital business together, in a small way. And if ever a man deserved it he does : up early and late, always most gentlemanly to every-body. His two lads would lie down for him to tread on them. Never drinks a drop, nor wastes a penny, nor says a bad word ; church every Sunday, morning and evening."

He was encouraged by his customer's marked attention.

"You give him a good character," he now said. "I suppose he's a friend of yours ?"

"Not more of mine than of the rest of his neighbors. You can ask where you like round here ; we all say the same—except, perhaps, at the Fox over yonder. He's too teetotal for them, and has influenced one or two of our costers hereabouts to be the same."

"Friendly with costers, then, also? Rather strange for a respectable tradesman!"

"Only with one, sir; a big chap they call the 'Little 'un,' who they say took a fancy for him because he knocked him down for ill-using a cripple."

"Good-looking man?" enquired the stranger carelessly. His heart contracted, with a sudden wrathful memory of a good-looking good-for-nothing, who had robbed him first of the love, then of the life, of the one human creature he cherished.

"He is," said the assistant, "a picture of a man, in his Sunday clothes—or even in his colored shirt."

"Quite a paragon," said Mr. Smith leisurely. "I think, while you finish that job, I'll go and taste his stock and have a look at him."

He made a few further enquiries, on the excuse of small purchases, in other shops, and finally proceeded to the Fruit Stores. He found matters in some confusion; a scavenger's cart had collapsed just outside, and had bespattered Mr. Tyrawley's windows with its liquid contents. Tyrawley, with his sleeves rolled up, displaying arms in which there was certainly more muscle than flesh, was cleaning them assiduously, pale and perspiring with the effort, for it was a heavy day, and casting anxious glances at his shop-door from time to time, to see that he did not miss a customer.

Mr. Smith drew near and watched him narrowly, then said, "Warm work, eh?"

Tyrawley turned round with rather a weary smile, but remarked that it was all in the day's work. He was rather surprised at the intentness with which Mr. Smith regarded him, and still more so when the latter followed him into the shop and gave him a liberal, but rather peculiar, order, which took time and trouble to carry out, consisting, as it did, of small quantities of every thing he had in stock.

"I'll give you the address presently," said his visitor carelessly. "Thanks," as Mr. Tyrawley lifted over the counter a high stool, the only seat he possessed, and covered it with a clean brown-paper bag.

"Awfully poor apology for a cushion, I'm afraid, sir; but I haven't time to be a Sybarite."

Mr. Smith continued to observe him with a keenness strangely touched from time to time with melancholy, and even softness. He took in every detail—the traces of care and pain on his tenant's face, his frequent cough, the slight hectic on his cheek, his well-mended clothes, contrasting with the undefinable polish of every word and action.

"Does your business pay here?" he asked.

"Fairly," said Mr. Tyrawley, repressing a sigh. "Unluckily I have no capital, and a fellow needs that before he can safely launch out. I hate debt."



"Been in the trade long?"

"Only a few months, sir. I started," said he, with a laugh, "as a coster's assistant; so I've risen in the world."

"May I ask what you were in before?"

The other's forehead clouded, and he looked his visitor straight in the eyes, and answered, "Something much less respectable, though, I suppose, more aristocratic."

"What?" said Mr. Smith bluntly.

Mr. Tyrawley rather elevated his eyebrows at this catechism, but replied, with calm candor, picking a handful of onions out of a basket:

"Since you honor me, sir, by taking an interest in me, I may reply—billiards, cards, and their concomitants. But it was a beastly life!" he added, wiping his brow; "and, thank Heaven, it's done with forever."

"Excuse my questions. I take some interest in beginners in trade. Do you like this, compared to the other?"

"Yes, though it's a hardish struggle." He leaned against the counter for a moment and coughed, as a man does whom coughing hurts.

"Chest weak?"

"Yes, sir, and heart too, I'm afraid; but I can get along, I think, all right, now summer is here. At least, I hope so, for if not——"

"What, if not?"

"The workhouse, I'm afraid," said Tyrawley dejectedly.



"But surely you might find some friend or relative who would help you a little, and make a pecuniary advance?"

"The only friend I have who could do that has done too much already—nursed me back from death's door, and a great deal besides that, which I couldn't bother a stranger with. Here's your parcel, sir. Where shall I send it?"

Mr. Smith seemed not to hear the question. He thought a moment, then said deliberately, "I sometimes help forward a deserving man, kept back for want of capital, myself. I suppose the friend you were speaking of could be referred to? If you like to trust me with his name, I'll think the matter over and communicate with you further."

Tyrawley was surprised. Strangers who offer loans without security are rare in Plebham, as elsewhere; but there was a plutocratic solemnity about Mr. Smith which forbade suspicion. He therefore scribbled down MacAdam's name and address on a billhead, with the observation that the doctor knew the best and the worst of him, if there was a best.

"You've forgotten to ask *my* name," said Mr. Smith.

"I concluded, sir, you would have told me, if you had wished me to know it."

"Unbusiness-like, but honorable, young man. Well, I wish you good-afternoon, and good trade."

Then Mr. Smith produced his purse, counted

his change with accuracy, gave his address—The Oaks, Grasswich—but no name, and departed, with a strange, long, wistful look in the other's face. He got his watch from the jeweller's without a needless word, and left Plebham straightway, and before that afternoon's post wrote to MacAdam a letter marked "private," which caused that worthy instantaneously to execute a portion of a Scotch reel before he sat down to answer it promptly and fully.

The excitement of the stranger's visit, and the faint hope it had created in Mr. Tyrawley's breast, had scarcely subsided before Mr. Jim Naylor bounced in, looking quite pale for him. He bolted the shop-door.

"Do you know who you've had here, guv'nor?" said he tragically.

Tyrawley shook his head.

"Why, Mr. William Smith, your landlord! and I'll lay a tenpun' note to a tanner that it's that hound brought him down upon yer. Did he say you would hear from him further, or summat of that natur'?"

His breathlessness communicated itself to Mr. Tyrawley, who became, moreover, much whiter than Jim himself.

"Yes, Jim, he did. What then?"

"Why, that's his way. That comes before the kick-out. Here's an awful go! But," said Mr. Naylor, with a forlorn satisfaction, "blowed and blessed if I don't square accounts with that there

little viper. Come, cheer up, my gentleman guv'nor. There's lots of other cribs besides this; or you could go foreman at the West End, now you knows the trade. Why, they'll jump at you, just for to wheedle the young ladies into buying bokays or bukkets—which is the French? Never say die!"

Mr. Tyrawley did rather say it in his heart, for he feared that Jim's theory was but too likely to be correct. However, he forced a smile and, being presently called upon to serve three small boys with apples, Mr. Naylor retired, leaving his sting behind him.

## CHAPTER XXII

### NEMESIS AND EXCELSIOR

MR. TYRAWLEY struggled through the next five days with an anxious heart and a weary body, for he began to feel that he was an Ishmael indeed. He almost made up his mind that, if expelled from Gregory Street, he would take his place among the hopeless swarm who gather round the dock gates, like the drift on the river outside, write a farewell note to MacAdam and Nina, and disappear, this time irrevocably.

Things did not look much brighter when, on the sixth morning, as he was sweeping out his shop in the teeth of a bitter wind (for summer) and cold rain, the early postman delivered to him the following letter :

“SIR: Mr. Smith requests that you will call upon him at The Oaks, Grasswich, at 3.30 tomorrow, Friday afternoon, *in re* your tenancy of No. 1 Gregory Street, Plebham.

“Yours, etc.,

“S. ROBINSON, Agent.”

Tyrawley laid aside the note, finished his sweeping in a half-hearted fashion, and sum-

moned Mr. Naylor to a council. That gentleman could only shake his head very gloomily, and comfort himself by threats of condign vengeance on Mr. John Paget.

"But you'd best go, because you may talk him into giving you time to turn around and look about you," he remarked.

Tyrawley's heart contracted as he looked around the little shop which had been the foundation stone of so many air-castles. A sort of dogged pride prevented his taking tram or train or putting on his Sunday clothes, as Jim suggested; so he arrived, after a long walk, drenched and exhausted, and feeling as if all the fight were gone out of him. He was not sorry to be conducted through the solemn splendors of the hall into a small back office looking on the stable-yard, the domain of Mr. Smith's agent when his services were required there. A post-card lay on the desk close to the chair placed for him, on which he could scarcely help seeing this inscription:

"DEAR MR. SMITH:

"It will give me great pleasure to call upon you at four o'clock on Friday.

"Yours faithfully,

"JOHN PAGET."

Mr. Tyrawley wiped his forehead, and for the moment shared Naylor's feelings. After he had

cooled his heels, and his small remaining stock of courage, for about a quarter of an hour, he was conducted to Mr. Smith's own office, where that gentleman sat reading some legal documents, in company with a friend as legal looking as the documents. He nodded to Tyrawley, without asking him to be seated.

"This, Mr. Sharp," said he, "is the person I was telling you about."

Mr. Sharp's countenance was professionally blank, but he took a very long look at the newcomer, taking in, the latter felt, his jersey, and then bowed to him with considerable politeness, at which a faint, grim smile flickered on Mr. Smith's lips, which was slightly and ruefully reflected on Mr. Tyrawley's.

"Well," said the former, "we'll proceed to business. I presume you can guess why I sent for you?"

"I suppose," said Tyrawley, rather doggedly, "it was to give me notice that you don't require me as a tenant any longer."

His heart beat quick; he could not help a slight touch of appeal in his tone; but Mr. Smith replied deliberately, "Precisely. I mean no reflection on you, but you are not the sort of tenant I want."

"A week's notice, I conclude?" said Tyrawley, hardening himself.

"We'll talk of that presently. I suppose you intend going on with the business elsewhere?"



"No, I don't think so," said Tyrawley. A beaten feeling was coming over him.

"Oh! Going back to the other pursuits?"

"No," answered the ejected tenant, drawing up his head defiantly, but speaking with attempted lightness. "I think I shall go in for agriculture; it will be pleasant, now the autumn is coming on."

"Farmer?" enquired Mr. Smith, elevating his eyebrows.

"No; laborer," was the curt reply.

Mr. Tyrawley did not see why he should be further cross-questioned by a landlord who was evicting him. So he looked at the door suggestively. At his answer, Mr. Smith had exchanged an approving look with his solicitor, who now began to finger the documents on the table.

"A moment," said Mr. Smith. "Before you leave, just cast your eye over those papers and give me your opinion. Show them to him, Sharp."

"You had better sit down, sir," said the polite Sharp.

Bewildered and annoyed, Tyrawley sat down and cast his eye carelessly over the papers. But it was with a widened gaze of unspeakable amazement that he gathered, from the by-ways of legal phraseology, the fact that certain large fruit and floral businesses, and large nurseries in the suburbs, were conveyed, for his exclusive use and benefit from this day forth, to Infelix Tyraw-



ley. His nostrils quivered, his hand trembled, his breath came quick—almost too quick for the faint question which his white lips could hardly form: “What—what can this mean? It is a cruel joke!”

Then Mr. Smith rose up and came to him, and, with rather a shaking hand on his shoulder and a husky voice, said: “No, it’s no joke, my fine fellow—for you are a fine fellow! I’ve turned you out of Gregory Street, but I’ve put you in there instead, for two reasons: First, because you’re a son of my poor dead Felicia, my little sister, and blood is thicker than water, after all; and, second, because, if you have had a bad past, you have shaken yourself free of it, and worked your way up from it like a man, and made me feel proud that you belong to me.”

Tyrawley tried to rise to answer, but the strain and the reaction were too great. A deadly whiteness swept over his face, a black mist before his eyes, and he collapsed in a helpless heap on the floor.

Mr. Sharp jumped up, and the two men lifted the long, limp figure on to a leather couch, while the matched parlor-maids were summoned in a hurry with restoratives.

“Excuse me, sir, but you were too hard on the poor fellow,” said Mr. Sharp, reproachfully to his client, as he stood in the background—“after such very creditable conduct on his part, too.”

“Oh, he’ll come round, poor lad!” said the

latter; "and, bless my soul, Sharp! you don't expect a fellow as big as a Life Guardsman to faint like a young lady."

At this juncture Tyrawley opened his eyes, and opined faintly that his heart was making an awful row about something.

Mr. Smith took the bottles of salts and sal-volatile from the maids' hands, and promptly ordered them to retire, with the remark that the gentleman, his nephew, would dine and sleep at The Oaks.

"I think," said Mr. Tyrawley, in an uncertain voice, and staring wildly about him, "I must be mad. What am I doing here? I ought to be at the shop."

Here his newly discovered uncle bade him hold his tongue, nearly choked him with the salts, and inconsistently asked him what wine he would take.

"I don't drink, sir, thank you. I shall be all right presently. I have done this sort of folly before. But I should be awfully obliged," he added entreatingly, "if you wouldn't mind giving me some explanation."

Mr. Smith cleared his throat, but words seemed hard to find; so Mr. Sharp stepped into the breach, with a clear and agreeable statement of the whole matter, and concluded by reading an abstract of the documents.

"You have shown that you like work," said Mr. Smith, "and have none of your rascally

father's ideas—nothing of him that I can see, except his good looks. But you look no more fit for business than that candle.”

His nephew now managed sufficient breath and comprehension to express his thanks; and a pleasant conversation followed, in which Mr. Tyrawley's manners produced their usual effect on Mr. Sharp, who cast congratulatory glances at intervals on his client.

“By the way,” said the latter, “there's that little whipper-snapper Page, or Paget, or whatever his name is.” That name had lost its terrors for Mr. Tyrawley now; he could laugh when Mr. Smith rang the bell, and said to the parlor-maid: “Ask Mr. Paget to step here.”

Now the hope of perfected vengeance had kept Mr. Paget in good humor through protracted waiting, and he entered with his usual well-assured jauntiness. It was of brief duration. His eye had scarcely fallen on Tyrawley before Mr. Smith remarked: “This, sir, is my tenant, whom I have turned out in compliance with your wishes, and whom your officious ill-nature has been the means of introducing to me as my nephew and my heir.”

Mr. Paget turned pale-green, and sneered and spluttered, “I—I—I'm at a loss——”

“I should think so,” said Smith. “If the man had been a stranger, I should feel it my duty to honor and help him.”

Here the amiable Tyrawley, pitying his foe's

discomfiture, and possibly with a thought of after family union, held out his hand. "I say, Paget," said he, "we'll forget the past, if you like. I suppose you thought you were doing right; only you did hit so hard, and always on the sore place."

But Mr. Paget would not see the hand. "I dare say," he replied, "such forgetfulness is convenient to *you*. However, I will not interrupt this interesting family drama, and will take my leave, expressing a hope, sir, that you and your legal adviser will not have cause bitterly to regret your precipitate generosity." And he quitted the room rather ingloriously.

It was growing dusk. Some parts of Grass-wich are lonely, with a suburban loneliness, and Mr. Paget thought he would take a short cut, and get out of it as quickly as possible. So he chose a narrow lane which led, he knew, to a tram terminus. He got about half-way when he suddenly felt a choking sensation caused by the insertion of some large knuckles between his neck and his collar; and the next moment found himself laid on his back in the muddy gutter, while a hoarse voice remarked :

"Now, you've got to do one of two things: lay there and let me kick you, or get up and lick me, if you can. It ain't no good calling the blessed copper, for he's a mile away."

Mr. Paget made no verbal reply, but merely scrambled up, aimed a feeble blow at his enemy's

stomach, which the latter characterized as "a foul," and then attempted to run away.

"No, yer don't," said Mr. Naylor, for it was he; catching hold casually of a handful of coat-tail, and bringing him back. "You've got to be punished, you have. And I'm the judge, and the jury, and the prison warder, and, so to speak, the hangman."

His grip was so strong, and his large form so magnified by just wrath, the dusk, and a vast red comforter, which covered his face up to the eyes, that Mr. Paget's spirit quailed, and he begged for mercy.

"No," said Mr. Naylor calmly. "*You're* a merciful character, ain't you? You don't hit a chap when he's made a slip, and black him all you can behind his back. Yah! you hit me! only fair this time, mind, or I'll hit you."

Thus encouraged, Mr. Paget made a futile and desperate dab at Mr. Naylor's large expanse of chin, and that gentleman, ducking his head carelessly aside, proceeded to administer a neat and complete thrashing. It was, however, strictly judicial, such, he afterward remarked to an intimate friend, as he would have administered to a nipper of his own, if he had had one. He slightly blackened Mr. Paget's eyes, grazed the tip of his nose, tore his clothes—with a vengeful remembrance of Mr. Tyrawley's jersey—threw his hat down and trampled on it, replaced it on his head with a bang; and con-

cluded with a general drubbing, which, in point of making every bone proclaim its existence, left nothing to be desired.

“There!” he said, conducting his victim by the collar with enforced rapidity and high action to a dead wall, and propping him against it like a weak-kneed doll, “you stop there, and don’t you venture to move nor call out for a blessed hour by that ticker of yours, or, chance the ducks, I’ll come back and finish my job complete.”

Mr. Paget had never come across the rough side of life before, and he was completely cowed, and in his terror more than obeyed Jim’s injunction. It was full two hours before he crept timorously back to the main road. Then, indeed, he sought the police station, and made an angry complaint; but he looked so terribly disreputable, blustered so feebly, and so abused the local police, that it was treated in the coldest and slightest manner; especially as he could not state either the name or the probable object of his assailant. It might, however, have been a consolation to Jim to learn that the chastisement he had administered implanted in Paget’s mind the first rudimentary idea of the painfulness of punishment.

When Mr. Tyrawley came down to breakfast next morning, white and languid, much bewildered by the luxury around him, but with a sense of a weight lifted off, many surprises



awaited him. He was informed, in the first place, that Gregory Street would know him no more, and that his destination for the next fortnight was the best suite of rooms in the best hotel in his old haunt of Claretown.

"It's awfully kind," he said, looking up from the depths of an easy chair at the solid figure of Mr. Smith, who smiled a smile of benevolent possession down on him. "Awfully! But, in the first place, I don't need rest; I'm only a little done from bother. And, in the second—why, really, my clothes aren't fit for such a swell place. Let me put it off, please, sir," he added persuasively, "till I can do you a little more credit."

"Clothes," said Mr. Smith sententiously, "do not make a man, nor a gentleman, which is less. Still, I've ordered somebody from Poole's to be here shortly, to supply what is needed."

"Poole!" gasped Tyrawley. "But that was quite unnecessary. You're much too good to me. You make me afraid I shall never turn out well enough even to show that I'm grateful, much less to repay you."

"Your friend, Dr. MacAdam, seems to think otherwise. And if he didn't, it's something, my dear lad, to have somebody of one's own"—and he laid his hand on his nephew's shoulder—"and so, so like my poor little Fel."

"I'm glad you think so, sir. I'm afraid," said Tyrawley apologetically, "I'm too much like my father to be pleasant."



"His features," said Mr. Smith, "but her eyes. Poor girl! this would make her happy."

A day or two later MacAdam's groom was controlling the impatience of Fireworks outside the Claretown Station. Dr. MacAdam himself waited on the platform to seize Tyrawley by both hands and nearly shake those members off. He was introduced to Mr. Smith, and then exclaimed characteristically :

"Look at this idiot! Writing to me that he was all right, but a trifling cold ! and looking as thin as a lath and as white as my shirt."

Tyrawley protested that he was only a little run down. MacAdam walked him and his uncle off, to get up behind Fireworks and have lunch at his house. The little doctor chaffed all the way, but there was a suspicion of tears in his eyes, and he managed to take Mr. Smith aside and whisper anxiously :

"I don't like his looks. Awfully phthisical. Make him coddle himself, or I'll be hanged if I don't think he'll give us the slip. Got that nasty bright look about his eyes."

And the doctor hurried upstairs to introduce Mr. Smith to his sister.

The afternoon, which was already well on when they rose from the luncheon-table, was spent in the discussion of Tyrawley's business prospects for the future, and of the humor and hardships of the last few months. Then uncle

and nephew·dined *tête-à-tête* but sumptuously at their hotel, and shortly after Mr. Smith evinced a remarkable restlessness, looking often at a mighty gold chronometer, a fac-simile of which he had presented to Tyrawley, whom its ponderous glories almost overawed.

“Why, a fellow,” he said, with a half-awkward, half-comic retrospect, “could live handsomely on this for a fortnight !”

Mr. Smith smiled grimly, and remarked that he had another “uncle” now. “But,” he added, “I have an engagement, which I must keep, on the West Cliff.”

“I’ll come with you, if I may, sir, and have a stroll on the beach meanwhile.”

He had an inward thought of how fitting it would be that he, who had been led, like Israel, through deep waters, should stand in the moonlight by the great sea which had so nearly been his grave, and give silent thanksgiving to his mighty Guide. So he parted with Mr. Smith on the stretch of turf above the beach, and then went dreamily down across the glistening pebbles, and seating himself on a rock like a rude arm-chair, leaned his head back on his arm and mused. The moon was making her glorious silver highway across the deep-blue ripples that murmured gently in the evening stillness, sliding back across the gleaming sand, a few yards further away. Under those whispering waves were the rocks among which he had knelt to die,

with the sirens' song in his ears, alternating with the Christmas carol of Rooksholm.

The sirens were powerless now; that higher song had silenced them. He looked up into the great vault of azure, with its star jewels overhead, and his soul seemed to mount on eagles' wings of wonder and praise.

"Yes," he murmured, "it has been, indeed, 'Peace on earth, and mercy mild.' Thank God!"

A light step neared his rocky seat, but he was too wrapped in visions of the past to hear it. He thought of how he had been used to save his own best treasure, the earthly instrument of his salvation; of that strange moment when first he held that dearest friend in his friendless arms and loved her; of that yet stranger moment when the magical touch of her young lips on his hand had shown him to what base use that hand had been given. He remembered it so keenly that he felt it there once more.

And lo! it was no vision. On that hand, which had not yet lost the roughness of the workaday world he had moved in, a light and tender kiss fell like a rose-leaf. He rose to his feet and turned slowly round, like a man under a spell. A tall and slender figure, with pale and shining hair, radiant eyes, and a tremulous smile, stood in the moon's white glory before him. Not a word was spoken till, her arm round his neck, her head on his shoulder, and his lips

fondly and reverently touching, now that shining hair, now that half-hidden brow, he whispered :

“ Oh, my heart’s darling ! Thank God ! ”

Mr. Smith’s errand has probably been guessed. While Tyrawley and Nina were arranging matters to their own satisfaction, though without the least definite plan, their elders in Cupola Square, where the St. Justs had arrived three days before, were settling more mundane things; Mrs. St. Just opining, with a fat sigh of relief, that she had always said Mr. Tyrawley was a charming man, though poor dear John Paget so disliked him.

“ Laws, Jim ! you’ll be in plenty of time. Why, it ain’t gone half-past nine yet.”

“ I’ll tell you what, old lady; if you don’t sew them busted buttons on, I’m blowed if I don’t go in nothing but them mawleys that my gentleman guv’nor put out of court so tidily first time as ever I seed him.”

Mr. Naylor was attired in a perfectly new sleeved waistcoat, so festively be-buttoned that it appeared to be trimmed with moonlight, and clattered like castanets as he moved. His hair, cut to half an inch all over his head, positively distilled hair oil, and his large face was shaved to quite an agonizing cleanness.

On the table, close to where his wife was sewing on buttons for dear life to a pair of vast white kid gloves, reposed a marketing basket contain-

ing a small sack of rice, a smaller basket of orange-blossoms, and a pair of the very largest-sized and newest white satin shoes. Mr. Naylor's face beamed with placid triumph as his eye fell on these.

"I'm doing it handsome," he said, "and quite the cheese, according to all aristocratic ways. There's the sating shoes, which means, I suppose, as they ain't no call to do nothin' but ride in their carriage all day long; and the orange blossoms, which, as you may say, cuts two ways, as being the usual thing, and also meaning a 'suffineer,' as you may say, of what trade he was in; and there's the rice, which signifies, I suppose, that there's plenty of rice-puddings when the babbies come."

"Now, Jim," said Mrs. Naylor, shocked, "don't you go and say that to the young lady, pretty dear!"

"What do you take me for?" replied Jim, with fine scorn; "me that's going to drive a pair of tiptop bay spankers, in a dark green wan, with gold letters—'The Flower and Fruit Stores'—as large as life, and see my gentleman guv'nor and his young duchess once a week reg'lar?"

"You might," said Mrs. Naylor reproachfully, "have done as they asted, and gone to the weddin' in the church, and took me."

"Not me!" said Jim. "I should have blowed my old nose through tears of joy when the swell

parson was asking him if he was downright sure he'd have her, or shouted out 'Hóoroar,' when I should have said 'Amen.' No, old gal, you can go in the gallery, as being the right place for you—not but what I've seen as many boys as gals there most times—but I stops outside to give 'em a proper rattler with these 'ere fancy concerns."

Mr. Naylor's programme was duly carried out, though Mr. Tyrawley was nearly bonneted by one of the large satin shoes, as he assisted his bride into the carriage; and Nina discovered that even orange-blossoms, when launched by a powerful and excited arm from the edge of the pavement, hurt a little; while the passers-by, whose eyes and ears he saluted with the best Patna rice, rose against Jim in a body.

The last sight bridegroom and bride saw, as they rolled away, was Mr. Naylor splitting the neat gray glove of little Dr. MacAdam, with a grip of agonizing friendship, as these two faithful architects of their fortunes saw them depart.

Sorrow and disaster come naturally enough to a human narrator, but happiness is hard to describe. That marriage had been a sacrament indeed, but it was, after all, not more so than that plunge into the green depths under Clare-town pier which was the first step in the Apotheosis of Mr. Tyrawley.

THE END.



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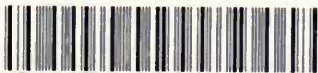
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